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Mr. Richard McKee

[Turkey]

APW VVV17 Aa ----- Iraqi Army Promises to Withdraw; More C 09-01 11:08a

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Iraqi Army Promises to Withdraw; More Clashes Reported

Eds: UPDATES with report of renewed clashes Sunday; additional comments from Iraqi government; deletes outdated material.

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Iraq has pledged a quick withdrawal from the northern city its troops captured in the Kurdish "safe haven" enclave, but renewed clashes were reported early Sunday.

Iraqi opposition sources said street fighting erupted for a second day in Irbil, the main Kurdish center in northern Iraq and part of the region policed by Western military aircraft since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

The report, carried on state-run radio in neighboring Iran, did not give details and could not immediately be confirmed.

By all accounts, Iraqi forces and one Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, were in control of most or all of Irbil following a large-scale offensive Saturday that included hundreds of tanks and thousands of troops.

Irbil is 20 kilometers (12 miles) north of the 36th parallel, the line the U.S.-led forces established in 1991 as a no-go zone for Iraqi forces.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan - PUK - also said Iraqi forces were shelling the town of Chemchemal in eastern Iraq. The group said it appeared the Iraqi forces were headed toward the city of Sulaymaniya, 30 kilometers (18 miles) further east, which is one of the main PUK strongholds along with Irbil.

The offensive was the largest by President Saddam Hussein's forces in five years and immediately caused alarm in the United States, where President Clinton put U.S. troops in the Gulf region on high alert.

Iraq said it launched the attack because the PUK had been cooperating with Iraq's longtime enemy Iran. Iraq has said that Iranian forces entered northeast Iraq in recent days to support the PUK. Iran has denied the charge.

Iraqi forces will return to their positions soon, Iraq's deputy U.N. ambassador, Saeed Hasan, told CNN late Saturday. He said a schedule has been agreed upon, but he would not give the timetable. The Pentagon said it had no information on whether Iraqi troops were showing any signs of pulling back.

Earlier, the state-run Iraqi News Agency quoted an unidentified government spokesman as saying Iraqi forces "would return to their former positions very soon." He did not elaborate.

A quick withdrawal could avert a showdown with Western forces, which have policed the Kurdish enclave since the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Iraq's internal campaign against the Kurds is not as clear-cut a provocation as its invasion of Kuwait, and Western leaders' choices this time are much more ambiguous.

Western forces have monitored northern Iraq by air from bases in southeast Turkey. There were no ground forces in place to prevent the advance by Iraqi troops and tanks.

Saddam on Saturday night chaired a meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council, the top decision-making body, and the government said afterward that it did not intend to retake control of northern Iraq - at this time.

But, it warned, "we believe our action was a clear message to those who conspired against their homeland," a reference to the PUK and its alleged links with Iran.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party's radio station said the group had captured Irbil, but did not mention receiving any help from the Iraqis. Christopher Lee, speaking from the office of the U.N. High Commissioner For Refugees in Baghdad, told The Associated Press that the city had fallen with little resistance.

However, PUK spokesman Adnan al-Mufti said Saturday night from London that "fighting is still going on and people are resisting."

"Hundreds of (Iraqi) tanks are inside the city. The army is storming houses and arresting people," he said.

He acknowledged the Iraqi army had captured about "70 percent of the city," which is 180 miles (290 kilometers) north of Baghdad.

The PUK said 450 Iraqi tanks, as well as helicopter gunships, were involved. It said that 30,000 Iraqi forces had massed in recent days in preparation for the offensive.

The group urgently appealed for help from the Western forces based in Turkey and the Persian Gulf, and reported "scores of civilians casualties." Others were fleeing in droves, it said.

It said the attack could be a prelude to the revival of the Iraqi government's "genocidal war" against the Kurds - a 3.5-million-member ethnic minority seeking independence from Baghdad.

Iraq regards the Kurdish safe haven as an impediment in its domestic affairs, but Saddam generally had observed guidelines set down by a U.N. resolution and refrained from launching a major strike to bring it back under his control until Saturday.

The Western countries set up the safe area in northern Iraq - including a no-fly zone to keep out Iraqi military flights - to protect the Kurds from Saddam's military after the 1991 rebellion in which the KDP and PUK joined forces. They turned on each other after the enclave was established.

The Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq covers 17,000 square miles (44,030 square kms) of mountain terrain bordering Iran, Turkey and Syria.

A U.S.-mediated a cease-fire collapsed Aug. 17 when the two factions resumed fighting over customs revenues from a road between Turkey and northern Iraq.

U.S.-sponsored peace talks that opened in London on Friday between the KDP and PUK were suspended Saturday.

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^Iraqi Army Controls Irbil, Second City Reported Taken<

^Eds: UPDATES in 13th graf with Saddam ordering withdrawal from Irbil, no immediate sign that pullout has begun.<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi forces and an allied faction Sunday appeared in full control of Irbil, the main Kurdish city in northern Iraq. There were unconfirmed reports they also captured Sulaymaniya, the second-largest city.

It was the largest military attack by Saddam Hussein's army in five years and it immediately set off alarm bells in the United States, where President Clinton put U.S. troops in the Gulf region on high alert.

In neighboring Iran, the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency quoted unidentified "sources close to Iraqi Kurds" as saying Iraqi troops and their Kurdish allies took Sulaymaniya on Sunday.

The report could not be confirmed by independent sources. Earlier reports _ also unconfirmed _ spoke of shelling close to Sulaymaniya, but the official Iraqi News Agency claimed the city was calm.

Saddam's forces Saturday stormed into Irbil, part of the Kurdish "safe haven" enclave, to dislodge one Kurdish faction, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and allow a second, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, to move in.

There were no confirmed casualty figures, but the PUK and other sources spoke of dozens of dead and wounded.

In addition, the PUK claimed Sunday that in the aftermath of their capture of Irbil, Iraqi forces "summarily executed" 96 members of the opposition Iraqi National Congress at their base southwest of the city.

The leader of the PUK, Jalal Talabani, called on the West to play a more active role in defusing the crisis.

"I am going to tell you frankly, we are waiting some days or let us say one week to see what is the reaction of the United States and West," he told BBC domestic radio.

"If the West betrayed us, and this is their greatest commitment we will surely turn to anyone who is ready to help us," he said.

Talabani did not specify to whom he would turn, but he added that unless the West intervened, "the area will be divided, one (area) pro-Iraqi and one pro-Iranian."

Iraq said it planned to withdraw quickly from Irbil, but U.S. officials and Kurdish opposition forces said they were skeptical.

After a Cabinet meeting in Baghdad late Sunday, the Iraqi defense minister, Lt. Gen. Sultan Hashim Ahmed, said Saddam had ordered him to withdraw all his troops from Irbil. But there was no immediate sign that this had taken place.

There were sketchy reports of scattered fighting in Irbil on Sunday, but most accounts suggested it was no more than a mopping up operation by Iraqi forces. Even the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan acknowledged that it had lost control of the city.

PUK spokesman Latif Rashid, speaking from London, said there were reports that Saddam's forces were "storming houses and stealing property the same way Saddam's army did in Kuwait" following a 1990 invasion.

Iraqi forces were not supposed to go near Irbil, which is 12 miles (20 kilometers) inside the Kurdish safe haven carved out by the U.S.-led forces after the 1991 Gulf War.

Iraq said it launched the attack because the PUK had been cooperating with Iraq's longtime enemy Iran.

Meanwhile, Iraq's state-run media warned the United States and its Western allies not to intervene on behalf of the Kurds.

"The Iraqi people ... are ready to provide an example that will inevitably remind the Americans of the Vietnam complex," al-Jumhuriya newspaper stated in a front-page editorial.

The PUK said 450 Iraqi tanks took part in Saturday's offensive, adding that 30,000 Iraqi forces had massed in recent days in preparation for the attack.

Iraq regards the Kurdish safe haven as a violation of its sovereignty, but it had refrained from launching a major strike until Saturday.

The Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq covers 17,000 square miles (44,030 square kilometers) of mountain terrain bordering Iran, Turkey and Syria.

The Western countries set up the safe area to protect the Kurds from Saddam's military after a failed 1991 rebellion in which the KDP and PUK joined forces.

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^White House Warns Saddam of Consequences from Attack<

^With: BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^By JIM ABRAMS=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. military forces around the world were on alert Monday after the White House warned Saddam Hussein his incursion into a Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq would not go unpunished.

Iraqi forces began withdrawing Sunday afternoon and were still leaving early Monday, said U.N. guard Gisper Nielsen, stationed in Irbil. Other U.N. sources said the Iraqis had withdrawn but were still outside the city.

Baghdad said late Sunday that Saddam had ordered his troops to withdraw.

"I don't want to say when or where or what, but we will respond and we will respond with consequences to Saddam Hussein," White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta said.

President Clinton ordered the 20,000 American troops in the Gulf region to a high state of alert Saturday. The Air Force was assembling an "air expeditionary force" of up to 40 fighter planes that could deploy to the Middle East.

Panetta said the administration is consulting with allies and Saddam's Middle Eastern neighbors on possible responses to the Iraqi president's military takeover of Irbil, a northern Iraq city within the safe haven area established by the allied forces after the 1991 Gulf War to protect the ethnic Kurd population there.

The Pentagon said Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was headed to the region for the consultations. Administration officials said Robert Pelletreau, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, was with Shalikashvili.

An administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the delegation is carrying a course of action recommended by Clinton, though they would not say what it was. They made clear that it's beyond Saddam's power now to prevent retribution for his actions.

Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, in a speech Sunday to the National Guard Association, accused the administration of a lack of vigilance. "For the last several weeks the threat on the Iraqi border has been rising but the Clinton administration delegated the matter to low-level staffers," Dole said.

Officials said President Clinton telephoned British Prime Minister John Major and also planned to call French President Jacques Chirac, America's two main partners in policing the safe haven and no-fly zone in northern Iraq.

Panetta spoke of a clear distinction between Saddam's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and his latest military adventure, in which one Kurd faction apparently requested Baghdad's help to defeat a rival faction allegedly allied with Iran. Virtually nobody recognized Saddam's claim to Kuwait, a neighboring emirate, but Iraq remains sovereign under international law over the area called Kurdistan by its Kurdish population.

"Regardless of that, it's still not justified," Panetta said. "We have made clear you do not use force. Saddam Hussein cannot use force in this situation, and we will respond accordingly."

He also urged Republicans to take a bipartisan approach "with regards to our position against Saddam Hussein so that he not misread any signals coming from this country as to what steps we'd take."

U.S. military forces in the region include the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, with almost 80 aircraft, in the Gulf, and the carrier battle group led by the USS Enterprise, now on a port visit in Greece.

Pentagon officials said four B-52 bombers, each carrying eight cruise missiles, flew to Guam as part of planning operations. The officials said the number of Air sorties enforcing a no-fly zone over northern Iraq doubled Sunday to about 140.

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^URGENT<

^Iraqi Troops Leaving Kurdish City, U.N. Says<

^Eds: COMBINES urgent series. EDITS.<

^AP Photos available<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press. Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Iraqi troops were leaving Irbil, the main city in the U.S.-protected Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq, U.N. guards said Monday.

Iraq captured the city Saturday in Saddam Hussein's largest military action since the end of the Gulf War in 1991. U.S. troops in the region were on high alert.

After a Cabinet meeting in Baghdad late Sunday, the Iraqi defense minister, Lt. Gen. Sultan Hashim Ahmed, said Saddam had ordered him to withdraw all his troops from Irbil.

Gisger Nielsen, of the U.N. Guard Contingency in Iraq stationed in Irbil, said by telephone that Iraqi troops had started withdrawing from Irbil Sunday afternoon and were still leaving Monday. He didn't have further information.

U.N. spokesman Paul Dahl, however, told Cable News Network early Monday that there were "no more Iraqi troops in Irbil."

Another U.N. official stationed in Irbil, speaking on condition of anonymity, said tanks and troops were out of the city Monday but "some tanks still remain outside the city."

"We do not know if they are going to go or if they are going to stay," the official said. "The situation is back to normal here in Irbil."

Nielsen said there were large numbers of casualties but exact numbers could not be confirmed.

Iraq's state-run media had warned the United States and its Western allies on Sunday not to intervene on behalf of the Kurds.

"The Iraqi people ... are ready to provide an example that will inevitably remind the Americans of the Vietnam complex," the newspaper al-Jumhuriya said.

Saddam's forces stormed Irbil to dislodge one Kurdish faction, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and allow a second, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, to move in.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency said Iraqi forces also captured Sulaymaniya, the area's second-largest city. The report, which quoted "sources close to Iraqi Kurds," could not be confirmed.

In the wake of the fighting, the United Nations said it would delay sending personnel to implement a deal letting Iraq sell oil to raise \$2 billion for needed food and medicine.

U.N. spokesman Sylvana Foa said the action was not intended as punishment for Iraq, but that the organization did not want to risk the safety of U.N. personnel.

Iraq has been under U.N. sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Speaking from the Kurdish region, PUK leader Jalal Talabani said on ABC television Sunday that "hundreds of people were killed or injured" during the 12-hour onslaught of artillery, missiles and tank fire.

Separately, the PUK claimed Sunday that Iraqi forces "summarily executed" 96 members of the opposition Iraqi National Congress at a base near Irbil.

Iraq said its offensive was intended as a "grave lesson" to the PUK and to Iran, whose troops it claims crossed into the Kurdish area last month. Iran denies its forces were involved.

The Iran News daily called on countries in the Gulf region to end the fighting without U.S. help. But it said they should be leery of Saddam, who waged a 1980-88 war with Iran.

Irbil lies 20 kilometers (12 miles) inside the safe haven carved out by the U.S.-led forces to protect the Kurds from Saddam's military after the ethnic rebels mounted a failed rebellion against Baghdad in 1991.

The PUK said 450 Iraqi tanks took part in the offensive Saturday adding that 30,000 Iraqi forces had massed in recent days in preparation for the attack.

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massed in recent days in preparation for the attack.

There have been no accurate casualty figures. But the PUK said in a statement sent to the AP by fax that ``scores'' of people were killed in the fighting.

The PUK also claimed Sunday that Iraqi forces ``summarily executed'' 96 members of the opposition Iraqi National Congress at a base near Irbil. On Monday, it said additional ``hundreds'' of suspected members of the PUK and other anti-Saddam groups had been rounded up and their fate was unknown.

Before they left, Iraqi troops conducted house-to-house searches in apparent pursuit of anti-Iraq activists, said Gisper Nielsen, of the U.N. Guard Contingency in Iraq stationed in Irbil.

But the KDP said Monday that all PUK fighters would be ``pardoned ... provided they present themselves to the authorities.''

KDP spokesman Sami Abdurrahman said his party had no choice but to seek Iraq's help after Iran sent troops into northern Iraq to support the rival PUK.

``Our rival has sided with Iran,''' Abdurrahman told reporters. ``Iranian troops had been attacking our positions.''

Abdurrahman criticized Washington for passiveness, saying ``the United States did not fulfill its duty as a strong hand to end the attacks by the PUK against us.''

In Salah ad-Din, which houses the KDP's headquarters, guerrillas sat on top of two anti-aircraft guns towed by a military truck and jubilantly raised their machine guns.

A victory parade went on while small trucks shuttled hundreds of KDP fighters between Irbil and Salah ad-Din as the signs of a war zone were everywhere.

There has been no electrical power in Irbil and in the surrounding towns including Salah ad-din since Saturday and the nighttime streets were lit with the headlights of military trucks.

Some KDP officials said a hydroelectric dam was hit by artillery and damaged, causing the power failure. Others said the rival PUK had control of the dam and was not allowing electricity.

Irbil lies 12 miles (20 kms) inside the safe haven carved out by the U.S.-led forces to protect the Kurds from Saddam's military after rebels mounted a failed rebellion against Baghdad in 1991.

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● Precede BAGHDAD<

● ^Troops Withdraw From Northern City; Rebels Want Saddam Punished<

● ^Eds: AMs. UPDATES with color, details from northern Iraq, Talabani quotes, INCORPORATES material from BC-US-Iraq and BC-Gulf-Iraq-Oil.<

● ^AP Photos available<

● ^By YALMAN ONARAN=

● ^Associated Press Writer=

● SALAH AD-DIN, Iraq (AP) ÷ As Iraqi troops withdrew from the northern Kurdish city of Irbil, refugees Monday described how Saddam Hussein's forces earlier had stormed the city in their biggest offensive since the Gulf War.

● ``It was very frightening. Boom here, boom there. Taka-taka-taka. We were scared to death,'' said Sabira Hamid Hursid, who fled with her four children to the nearby city of Salah ad-Din.

● ``My husband was also killed. I ran out with my children, fearing for our lives.''

● Anti-Saddam Kurdish rebels called on the international community to punish Saddam for his capture of Irbil, which is 21 miles (35 kilometers) southwest of Salah ad-Din. Both cities are in a region that nominally is protected by the U.S.-led allies.

● Even though Iraqi troops withdrew from Irbil itself early Monday, U.N. guards in the city told The Associated Press there were still Iraqi tanks in fields three to six miles (five to 10 kms) outside the city.

● Jalal Talabani, leader of the anti-Saddam Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told the AP that the Iraqi leader must be made to pay for his attack on Irbil.

● ``Saddam Hussein must be punished and must pay the price of the crimes which he committed inside Irbil,'' Talabani said.


● Washington made clear it was ready to retaliate, with White House spokesman Mike McCurry saying Saddam must not go unchallenged.

● The United States said it had put its estimated 20,000-strong force in Turkey and the Gulf region on alert, suggesting a military operation against Saddam might be in the offing.

● A U.S. administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Washington was not impressed by the pullout reports. The official said it appeared Saddam had simply deployed forces just outside Irbil, with Iraqi-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party forces taking up positions inside the city.

● The official said it was ``not a significant'' Iraqi movement.

● Oil prices in Europe jumped sharply on news that the United Nations had delayed its plan to allow Iraq to resume limited oil sales. In London, Brent crude oil prices were up 84 cents to dlrs 21.62 per barrel.

● Saddam's troops stormed Irbil Saturday to dislodge the PUK and allow the KDP, to move in. 

● The PUK said 450 Iraqi tanks took part in the offensive Saturday, adding that 30,000 Iraqi forces had

[Kurdish]

APW VVV25 Aa ----- Precede SALAH AD-DIN

09-03 10:07a

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru, 0868

Precede SALAH AD-DIN

U.S. Launches Attack on Iraq

Eds: NEW throughout to update with details of attack. INCORPORATES Iraq-Alert. Changes byline. Clinton statement expected at 1200 GMT.

AP Photos

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Air raids sirens shrieked in Baghdad Tuesday as the United States launched an attack on Iraq to punish Saddam Hussein for weekend assaults on Kurdish rebels.

In Washington, a Pentagon official said U.S. cruise missiles were launched Tuesday at "selected air defense targets" in Iraq. It offered no details.

The alert in Baghdad, a city of 4 million people, was still on more than an hour after the sirens went off at 9:25 a.m. (0525 GMT). Iraq's state media made no comment on the alarm or the Pentagon reports.

Pentagon officials disclosed the strike 30 minutes after air-raid sirens sounded. Barely 15 minutes later, the senior official said it was over.

Iraqis, hardened by two recent wars and economic and social hardships, appeared unshaken with pedestrians and motorists filling the streets of Baghdad during the morning rush hour.

A senior Pentagon official, speaking in Washington on condition of anonymity, said the operation included Air Force and Navy forces.

President Bill Clinton had ordered the mission, the Pentagon said, and was expected to make a formal statement on the attack later Tuesday.

In London, Prime Minister John Major's government gave its backing Tuesday to the attack.

"The British government fully supports the unequivocal message to Saddam Hussein that repression of innocent civilians and reckless acts of brutality are unacceptable," Major's office said in a statement.

Defense Secretary Michael Portillo said in a BBC radio interview that British forces in the area were not involved in the strikes.

The United States acted in retaliation for Saddam's invasion of Irbil, the main city in the allied protected "no-fly" zone in northern Iraq. The offensive on Saturday was Saddam's biggest military foray since the 1991 Gulf War.

Although Iraqi troops pulled back from Irbil on Monday, U.S. officials said the Iraqi military was marching on toward other Kurdish areas in northern Iraq, where U.S.-led allied forces have set up a "safe haven" for the 3.5 million Kurdish minority since the 1991 Gulf war.

Mehin Gokabatix

White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said it appeared Saddam's objective was Sulaymaniyah, an administrative center for the Kurdish area that lies just south of the "no-fly" zone.

"Our interest is in making sure that Saddam does not believe that unjustified behavior of this type is cost free," McCurry said. "Our concern here is what Saddam believes he has gained from a strategic viewpoint."

A U.N. guard in Irbil says some of the Iraqi tanks in outskirts of the city have started to move out. "We can see them start moving up back to their territory," he said.

There was no confirmation of this report. Iraqi troops did not allow reporters to approach Irbil.

But U.N. workers there told The Associated Press earlier that there were still Iraqi tanks in fields five to 10 kilometers (three to six miles) outside the city.

The anti-Saddam Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said in a statement Monday night that its positions outside of Sulaymaniyah had come under shelling.

It said Iraqi forces, including tanks, were moving in the direction of Sulaymaniyah, one of the two main Kurdish cities in the north, along with Irbil. The PUK controls Sulaymaniyah.

The group also said that Iraqi intelligence officials had moved into Salah ad-Din and rounded up 150 members of the Iraqi National Congress, an opposition group made up of numerous factions.

The groups claims could not be verified.

Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made urgent trips to Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt to rally Arab support for a U.S. military strike.

Saudi Arabia agreed to cooperate in any U.S. retaliatory action, Saudi sources said on condition of anonymity.

Despite Shalikashvili's personal entreaties to King Hussein, however, Jordanian Information Minister Marwan Moasher said his country "will not be part of any effort that involves military operations."

Saddam's offensive prompted the United Nations to delay its plan to let Iraq resume limited oil sales despite sanctions imposed in 1990 after its invasion of Kuwait.

Iraqi troops stormed Irbil on Saturday. The Kurdistan Democratic Party had asked Iraq for help in dislodging the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Both groups want an independent Kurdish area that would include northern Iraq, but the KDP is willing to work with Saddam's government in exchange for greater autonomy, while the PUK will accept only independence and has allied itself with Iraq's archrival, Iran.

The Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq was carved out by the U.S.-led forces to protect the Kurds from Saddam's military after rebels mounted a failed rebellion against Baghdad in 1991.

BC-ANALYSIS-US vs Saddam,0774

Saddam's Invasion: No Surprise

With BC-US-Iraq

By LAURA MECKLER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Gulf War may have left Saddam Hussein beaten and battered, but the Iraqi president never stopped thumbing his nose at the world - especially the United States.

And experts say no one should be surprised by the new confrontation with President Clinton over Saddam's attacks on the Kurdish minority in northern Iraq.

"It's a gamble, but this guy is a gambler," William Quandt, an expert on the Middle East at the University of Virginia, said Monday.

"He's constantly testing to see what kind of response he's going to get from the powers he's under," said Quandt, who served in the Nixon and Carter administrations. "He's constantly looking for chinks in the armor."

Saddam has clashed repeatedly with the United Nations over sanctions imposed after the 1991 war - on chemical and nuclear weapons inspections, restrictions on its armed forces and a punishing embargo on Iraqi oil sales.

The United Nations shoved; Saddam pushed back.

Just three months into Clinton's presidency, Saddam provoked a test of the new president's resolve: 11 Iraqi agents and four others were caught in an assassination plot on President Bush just before his visit to Kuwait.

In retaliation, U.S. warships fired 24 Tomahawk cruise missiles at intelligence headquarters in Baghdad on June 27, 1993. By Iraq's count, eight people died.

Clinton was tested again in October 1994, when 80,000 Iraqi troops moved south toward Kuwait in what the West feared was a rerun of Saddam's 1990 invasion and the resulting 1991 war. The president responded by dispatching a carrier group with 54,000 troops and warplanes to the Gulf.

Saddam blinked; Iraqi troops pulled back.

The United States said Baghdad must "stop being the bully in the neighborhood." That admonition went unheeded.

Saddam can't give up, said Edward Djerejian, director of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.

"What would you expect?" Djerejian said. "He's just lost a terrible war, but he says to his people, 'The battle goes on. You've got to stick with me.'"

• If he didn't fight back, his regime would fall apart, said Richard Haass, director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institute, a Washington think tank.

"If he were to change he would be not only out of power, he would be dead," Haass said. "He rules by fear and by force."

From Bush until today, U.S. policy has been to destabilize Saddam through U.N.-imposed economic sanctions, support for dissident groups and by keeping his military on a short leash.

But Saddam survived coup attempts and outside pressure, continuing to persecute the rebellious Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the South.

The Kurds, who had battled Saddam through the 1980s, were protected after the Gulf War by a U.N.-imposed "no fly" zone.

But the Shiites were not, and Saddam attacked them by air, prompting the Allied forces to impose another "no-fly zone" in the south in August 1992. It was enforced by regular allied air patrols.

"That was the first indication of (Saddam's) real misreading of the whole situation," Quandt said.

In early January 1993, with Bush still in the White House, Saddam refused to remove surface-to-air missiles from southern Iraq. Allied warplanes responded with an attack on Iraqi missile sites. U.S. warships also fired cruise missiles at a nuclear facility near Bagdad.

Quandt said the seeds of the current showdown go back to Iraq's eight-year war with Iran, which ended in 1988. Saddam turned on the Kurds living in northern Iraq, massacring 8,000 to 10,000 people, Quandt said.

"It was close to a genocidal campaign," he said.

But at the time, the United States was worried about containing Iran and simply relieved that Iran had not won the war, he said.

"We turned a blind eye," he said. "We had a whole bloody record."

The lesson to the United States now should be to get closer to the Kurdish leadership and the internal Iraqi opposition in hopes of driving Saddam out of power, said Djerejian, who was assistant secretary of state for near-eastern affairs under Presidents Bush and Clinton.

"That's only way it will end," he said.

"We've treated the whole post Gulf War era as a waiting game - that one day he'll fall somehow and then we'll figure out what to do next," he said. "But it hasn't happened."

[Kurdish]

APW VVV26 Aa ----- Calls for Restraint Follow U.S. Missile 09-03 1:38p

BC-Iraq-World Reaction

Calls for Restraint Follow U.S. Missile Attack on Iraq

By SUE LEEMAN

Associated Press Writer

LONDON (AP) - Britain, Germany and Japan applauded. Russia and China were critical. In between, many other nations urged restraint on both sides after the United States pounded southern Iraq with cruise missiles Tuesday.

In Hong Kong and London, share prices fell in reaction to the attacks.

"Our reaction is one of understanding, although we would have liked the armed intervention to be delayed," said Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes.

"This is something that should have been examined in greater depth first."

U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers and Navy ships fired between 30 and 50 missiles at military targets early Tuesday, retaliation for President Saddam Hussein's invasion of Irbil, a city in the U.S.-protected "no-fly" zone in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq.

The offensive was Saddam's biggest military venture since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and refugees reported scores of deaths.

In Moscow, the Russian foreign ministry fretted that the U.S. strikes could send events in the always fractious region spiraling "out of control."

"Developments in the Persian Gulf region are taking an extremely dangerous course," the Interfax news agency quoted an unidentified foreign ministry official as saying. "Now everything depends on what further action the Americans take."

China deplored an attack on Iraqi territory.

"We believe Iraq's territory should be respected," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang. "We hope all sides show an attitude of restraint."

New Zealand's prime minister called for international intervention in the crisis.

"We would like to see the matter picked up by the U.N. Security Council and take what would be described as an objective view of events in Iraq," Jim Bolger said.

France, too, urged a "political solution."

Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said dialogue between the Iraqi government and the Kurds "is to us the only way to contribute, by a political solution, to the return to calm and stability in Iraqi Kurdistan."

From Britain, which provided logistical support for the strikes, there was immediate, unstinting backing.

"The British government fully supports the unequivocal message to Saddam Hussein that repression of innocent civilians and reckless acts of brutality are unacceptable," Prime Minister John Major's Downing St. office said.

German Foreign Minister Volker Ruehe, who is visiting Israel, said the strikes provided "a very good opportunity for us to get exact information about the situation" in Iraq.

"I believe what matters now is that all in the free world stand together to make it clear that no one can do something like this without being punished. And the Americans deserve our full support," he said.

In Tokyo, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told reporters that if the raid achieves "the objectives of the U.N. resolutions, Japan understands it and will support it as needed," a reference to 1991 U.N. resolutions calling on Iraq to stop suppressing its Kurdish minority.

Following the attacks, Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index tumbled 1.3 percent.

"It's reminiscent of the Gulf War. It's got investors really jittery," said Kent Rossiter, senior institutional sales manager at Nikko Securities Asia Ltd.

Share prices were also lower in London at midmorning, but the fall was not as steep.

In northern Iraq, thousands of Kurds thronged the streets to celebrate the raids.

"Everyone is considering this day a feast," said Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, speaking from the region.

"People are very glad and always everywhere they are glad, they are shouting for America, for President Clinton etcetera," Talabani told British Broadcasting Corp. radio.

"We hope that it will continue until (Saddam's) military aggressive forces will be dismantled and the Iraqi people will be rescued from this dictatorship," said Talabani.

But a leading Arab-American organized denounced the attack as a vote-seeking "act of terrorism" by President Clinton - and warned of retaliation.

"America should not cry foul" if the missile strikes lead to terror attacks against the United States, said M.T. Mehdi, a political scientist and head of the 25,000-member, New York-based American-Arab and Muslim Council, said..

Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole urged further action against Iraq to curtail Saddam's power and end "his defiance of the international community and of his atrocities against the Kurdish minority in Iraq."

(scl/eml)

[Kurdish]

APW VVV25 Aa ----- Allied Force Moves Military Center From 09-03 1:04p

BC-Turkey-US-Iraq

Allied Force Moves Military Center From Northern Iraq

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - The U.S.-led air force protecting Iraqi Kurds pulled its military coordination center out of northern Iraq on Tuesday.

"In view of the heightened tension, they thought it was becoming unsafe to stay there," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Michael Shavers, a spokesman at the Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey.

But others believed the move was done to protest an Iraqi Kurdish group's alliance with Baghdad against a rival Kurdish faction. Saddam Hussein's forces began moving against the faction last week and the United States responded Tuesday with cruise missile strikes on Iraqi targets.

Twenty-one soldiers - American, Turkish, French and British - moved from Zakho to the Turkish town of Silopi, about 10 kilometers (six miles) from the border, said Shavers.

The coordination center oversees the work of private aid agencies in northern Iraq. It also monitored the needs of Iraqi Kurds, who set up a semi-autonomous state following the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The allied warplanes protecting the region are based at Incirlik.

Turkish governments have long supported the idea of moving the center to Turkey, but Washington had been firmly stood against it.

A Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the move appeared to be a result of the Kurdistan Democratic Party's cooperation with Baghdad against the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The Democratic Party is in control of the parts of northern Iraq near the Turkish border, including Zakho.

Shavers told The Associated Press that the coordination team would stay at Silopi "for the foreseeable future."

(za/bm)

MCC

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(za/bm)

[Kurdish]

APW VVV26 Aa ----- U.S. Slams Cruise Missiles Into Iraq fo 09-03 3:39p

BC-US-Iraq, 12th Ld-Writethru,1030

U.S. Slams Cruise Missiles Into Iraq for Kurdish Attacks

Eds: LEADS with 5 grafs to ADD Clinton comment, EDITS thereafter to conform. ADDS 2 grafs at end with allies' response, Clinton quote. NO PICKUP.

By SUSANNE M. SCHAFER

AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bill Clinton unleashed 27 cruise missiles at military targets in southern Iraq Tuesday, punishing Saddam Hussein for attacking Kurds in a U.N.-designated safe zone in northern Iraq. "Reckless acts have consequences," Clinton said.

Two Air Force B-52 bombers and two Navy ships in the Gulf launched a total of 27 missiles in the military operation, said several military officials who spoke on condition their names not be used.

One senior military officer said further strikes would depend upon damage assessments and whether Saddam would ease his attacks on Kurdish strongholds north of the 36th parallel, the southern boundary of the safe haven set up by the United States and its allies to protect the Kurds after the Gulf war.

In an address to the nation, Clinton said there still was no evidence that Saddam had moved his troops. "As always with Saddam, it depends on what he does, not what he says."

The administration brushed aside reports quoting Saddam saying he no longer would recognize the no-fly zones. Indeed, Clinton said the southern no-fly zone would be extended all the way from the Kuwaiti border north to the outskirts of Baghdad.

"The whole idea is to teach him that aggression doesn't pay, that there will be a cost and he will lose very real military assets if he continues to violate international norms," the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday.

Tuesday's strike appeared to be the only attack to be mounted, at least for the moment. A second Pentagon official said, "The next step will be up to Saddam."

The administration brushed aside reports quoting Saddam saying he would no longer recognize the no-fly zones. "We're going to absolutely enforce the no-fly zones," the official said. Indeed, the official said the no-fly zone in southern Iraq would be expanded northward.

The cruise missiles were fired at air defense targets in the vicinity of the Tallil air base in southwestern Iraq, the nearby city of an Nasiriyah on the Euphrates River, the city of al-Iskandariyah just south of Baghdad, and al-Kut, a southern city on the Tigris River. The B-52s escorted by Navy F-14 Tomcat fighters fired 13 cruise missiles; the two Navy ships fired 14.

Targets struck inside Iraq included surface-to-air missile sites, radar installations and command-and-control installations, the senior military officer said. No sites in Baghdad were targeted, he added.

The strike came after a hectic weekend mix of campaigning and international diplomacy as Clinton readied military and economic steps against Saddam. It was not the first time Clinton had crossed swords with Saddam. In 1993, Clinton ordered U.S. warships to fire 24 Tomcat cruise missiles at intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retaliation for an assassination plot against former President George Bush.

Two months out from the presidential election, the action could bolster Clinton's image as commander in chief. Republican rival Bob Dole has sought to portray Clinton as a weak leader whose lack of military experience has hurt U.S. stature across the globe.

Yet Dole quickly fell into ranks after the attack, declaring, "I stand foursquare behind our men and women in uniform. ... They should know that the thoughts and prayers of every American - for their safety and successful completion of their mission - are with them."

Dole also said he hoped "this development marks the beginning of decisive action by the United States to curtail the power of Saddam Hussein, and the end of his defiance of the international community and of his atrocities against the Kurdish minority in Iraq."

Early reaction from Congress was supportive.

Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, said, "It's measured and it does send a signal" to Saddam. On NBC television, Congressman Lee Hamilton, ranking Democrat on the International Relations Committee, said the bombings were appropriate.

Normally, it takes several hours - and sometimes days - for a full assessment of target strikes by using spy planes or satellite reconnaissance.

The B-52s that took part in the attack had been sent to the Pacific island of Guam over the weekend. The Air Force uses the AGM-86C air-launched cruise missile.

Two U.S. Navy ships in the Gulf - the destroyer USS Laboon and the cruiser USS Shiloh - launched Tomahawk cruise missiles in the strike, a Pentagon official said.

Both types of cruise missiles are able to follow terrain to their targets, and allow pilots or ships to fire their weapons from hundreds of miles away.

The U.S. military strike came after it appeared Iraqi troops were not pulling back from their original point of attack, the Kurdish city of Irbil, as Clinton had demanded.

Also, the Iraqis were shelling the town of Sham Shamal, and appeared to be preparing to attack it. They also appeared to be continuing their move towards Sulaymaniyah, a senior Pentagon official said.

There also was evidence that Iraqi troops were hunting down and killing political opponents in the areas they were seizing.

An administration official said the assault on Irbil was deemed by the United States a violation of U.N. Resolution 638 prohibiting Saddam from oppressing his people.

In London today, the British government said it "fully supports the unequivocal message to Saddam Hussein that repression of innocent ns andts of brutality are unacceptable." Germany and Japan also fell into line, but France and Spain suggested diplomacy would have been a better course.

Asked about the mixed response, Clinton looked uncomfortable and said, "I can only tell you what I believe is right ... and I have done my best to cooperate with others."

[Kurdish]

APW VVV26 Aa ----- U.S. Air Force, Navy Attack Iraq

09-03 4:51p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 10th Ld-Writethru,0951

U.S. Air Force, Navy Attack Iraq

Eds: UPDATES with Clinton announcing no-fly zone expanded, quotes from Aziz, U.S. defense minister. Trims. No pickup.

AP Photos NY191-192,HBR101,BAG1

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - U.S. forces fired 27 cruise missiles on Iraq Tuesday to punish Saddam Hussein for a weekend assault on Kurdish rebels. But the Iraqi leader remained defiant, vowing to teach the Western allies an "unforgettable lesson."

The Iraqi military said five people were killed and 19 wounded. It claimed the missiles struck "population centers" and that most of the casualties were civilians, but did not give details of the targets.

President Clinton said he ordered the missile attacks to send a blunt message to Saddam that "when you abuse your own people or threaten your neighbors, you must pay a price."

Clinton announced that the United States was extending the ban on Iraqi flights and military action in southern Iraq to the southern suburbs of Baghdad. The cruise missile strikes targeted Iraqi facilities that could threaten U.S. planes enforcing the expanded flying ban.

Meanwhile, a senior aide to Saddam said Iraqi forces had completed their withdrawal Tuesday from a U.S.-protected Kurdish city they attacked at the weekend, sparking the new confrontation with the United States.

In a televised speech hours after the missiles struck, Saddam said he no longer recognized the U.N. ban on Iraqi military activity in northern and southern Iraq.

"From now on, pay no attention to damned imaginary no-fly zones," Saddam told his armed forces. "Depend only on God, and hit hard and professionally at any flying target that belongs to the allied aggressors that penetrates the airspace of your beloved and glorious homeland."

U.S., British and French warplanes fly dozens of missions over southern and northern Iraq every day to enforce the so-called no-fly zones, which roughly cover about one-third of Iraqi territory.

"Fight, resist these aggressors and teach them a new unforgettable lesson," Saddam said.

He said the U.S. assault, launched in response to Iraq's weekend offensive against Kurdish rebels, had caused "minimal damage." He claimed Iraq's air defenses shot down most of the missiles.

Rear Adm. Edward Moore, commander of the USS Carl Vinson task force in the Gulf, said a total of 27 missiles were fired on southern Iraq, below the 32nd parallel.

"The strikes were conducted with both ship-launched Tomahawks and conventional cruise missiles and were directed toward Iraqi air defense sites and command and control facilities," Moore told reporters aboard his ship.

He said, "The strikes were ordered as a warning to Iraq to adhere to requirements outlined in U.N. resolutions," adopted after the 1991 Gulf War that evicted Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Calling Saddam a "regional bully," U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said that the Iraqi leader posed a major threat to U.S. interests - namely, the flow of oil to the world.

Britain said it supported the U.S. action, though its forces were not involved. France, the third main partner in the anti-Iraq coalition, said it was told in advance of the attack, but still preferred a "political solution."

In Baghdad, a city of 4 million people, air raid sirens resounded at 9:25 a.m. (0525 GMT). But Iraqis, hardened by two recent wars and economic and social hardships, appeared unshaken.

Pedestrians and motorists filled the streets during the morning rush hour.

Clinton ordered the strike in retaliation for Saddam's assault of the Kurdish city of Irbil, the largest in the allied protected "no-fly" zone in northern Iraq. Saturday's attack was Saddam's biggest military foray since the 1991 Gulf War.

Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, said the troops completed their withdrawal from the Irbil region Tuesday, "several hours" before the U.S. strikes.

Aziz denied Baghdad planned to attack other areas in Kurdistan, telling CNN that U.S. and rebel claims that Iraqi forces were moving on other cities in the Kurdish region were "totally baseless."

The Patriotic Union said the Iraqi military, after evicting anti-Baghdad activists from Irbil, withdrew and regrouped for an attack on villages and towns to the east.

In a statement three hours before the U.S. missile attack, the PUK said tank and artillery fire was pouring on Bestana, Degala and Koysanjak near Irbil.

Some 100 miles (160 kilometers) to the south, the Iraqis were pounding Chemchemal, which is just west of Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest city in the region after Irbil.

White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said Monday that Saddam's objective appeared to be Sulaymaniyah, an administrative center for the Kurdish area that lies just south of the "no-fly" zone.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani sent a letter to President Clinton to thank him for Tuesday's punitive strike on Iraq. Talabani praised Clinton's "noble act of courage."

Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made urgent trips to Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt to rally Arab support for a U.S. military strike.

Saudi Arabia agreed to cooperate in any U.S. retaliatory action, Saudi sources said on condition of anonymity.

Jordanian Information Minister Marwan Moasher said his country "will not be part of any effort that involves military operations." Egyptian officials would not comment on their talks with Shalikashvili.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV26 Aa ----- NATO Chief Supports U.S. Attack Against 09-03 2:59p

BC-NATO-US-Iraq

NATO Chief Supports U.S. Attack Against Iraq

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) - NATO's top official voiced support Tuesday for the U.S. attack on Iraq, calling the air strike a "justified, measured and proportionate" response to Iraq's aggression against Kurdish rebels.

"I hope that this clear message will be heeded by Saddam Hussein and that he will immediately withdraw his forces from the area, stop any further brutal attacks and comply fully with U.N. resolutions," NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana said in a statement.

"Iraq has once again blatantly and gravely violated U.N. security council resolutions and mounted an aggressive attack against civilians inside the exclusion zone in northern Iraq," he added.

"Against this background, the U.S. action this morning was a justified, measured and proportionate reaction."

U.S. officials said bombers and warships launched dozens of cruise missiles early Tuesday against targets in Iraq to retaliate against Saddam's attacks on Kurds in a U.N.-declared safe zone.
(ml)

031201 Sep GMT

BC-UN-Iraq,0416

Security Council To Consider Iraqi Sanctions Tuesday

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - The U.N. Security Council was expected Tuesday to maintain economic sanctions on Iraq following the U.S. military attack on President Saddam Hussein for his armed incursion against rebel Kurds in the north.

The council had been expected to renew the sanctions, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, even before the President Bill Clinton unleashed 27 cruise missiles at military targets in southern Iraq.

Council members say they will maintain sanctions, which are renewed every 60 days, until they are convinced that Iraq has complied with U.N. orders to dismantle his long-range missiles and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs.

The council was to hear a report by chief U.N. weapons inspector Rolf Ekeus about efforts to verify Iraqi compliance.

Council diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they did not expect any formal resolution during Tuesday's session.

Escalation of the latest crisis between Iraq and the United States was expected to complicate the range of activities undertaken by the United Nations in Iraq.

On Sunday, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali delayed implementation of the oil-for-food deal, under which Iraq will be allowed to sell dlrs 2 billion worth of oil for an initial 180-day period to buy food and medicine. Iraq accepted the plan June 20, and it had been expected to go into effect within weeks.

U.N. officials cited instability in northern Iraq and the safety of U.N. employees in deciding to delay sending out 14 oil monitors and 32 customs officials. Their presence is necessary for the oil-for-food deal to take effect.

The United States has cited Security Council Resolution 688, approved in April 1991, as the foundation for the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq.

But the resolution does not explicitly establish any protected zones in Iraq. Nor does it ban Iraqi troops from any area of the country. The resolution simply demands that Iraq end repression of minorities and allow international humanitarian groups access to "all those in need of assistance."

It does not authorize the use of force. Turkey and Iran have sent troops into the Kurdish areas of Iraq without meeting any armed response from the United States or its allies.

031325 Sep GMT

[Kurdish]

APW VVV26 Aa ----- Clinton Explains US Strike Against Iraq 09-03 4:39p

BC-US-Clinton-Iraq, 2nd Ld-Writethru

Clinton Explains US Strike Against Iraq; Expands No-Fly Zone

EDs: New material throughout, Perry warning to Iran

By TERENCE HUNT

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Clinton said Tuesday he ordered cruise missile attacks against Iraqi air defense installations to make Saddam Hussein "pay a price" for attacking the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil in northern Iraq.

In a nationally broadcast statement from the Oval Office, said, "These acts demand a strong response and they have received one." The defense secretary said the United States acted alone in its own national interest.

Clinton said the United States was expanding the "no-fly zone" in Iraq to deny Iraqi military flights from the Baghdad suburbs south to Iraq's border with Kuwait. Clinton said this would significantly restrict Iraq's offensive capabilities.

Further, the president said that an already-postponed food-for-oil deal with Iraq will be put on hold until it can be determined that the humanitarian supplies can be delivered.

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary William Perry said the United States had warned Iran "not to meddle in this conflict in northern Iraq."

It is the second time Clinton has ordered a cruise missile strike against Iraqi military targets. In 1993, Clinton ordered U.S. warships to fire 24 Tomahawk cruise missiles at intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retaliation for an alleged assassination plot against former President Bush.

Explaining his decision to launch military strikes, Clinton said Saddam had ignored repeated weekend warnings from the United States and the international community not to use his troops against the Kurdish population in the northern town of Irbil.

"Our objectives are limited but clear: to make Saddam pay a price for the latest act of brutality," Clinton said. The president brushed off Iraq's claim that it was withdrawing from Irbil.

"Saddam Hussein's army today controls Irbil, and Iraqi units remain deployed for further attacks," the president said.

In Baghdad, Saddam was defiant and said he viewed the no-fly-zones null and void. In reply, Clinton said, "Well, as always with Saddam Hussein, it depends entirely on what he does - not on what he says, but what he does." He said Saddam's actions would drive the U.S. response.

Overnight, Clinton unleashed 27 cruise missiles at military targets in southern Iraq. "We must make it clear that reckless acts have consequences," Clinton said.

The president acknowledged that some allies were lukewarm in their public comments about the U.S. strikes but said: "I think it is important to move now." He said, "We have historically taken the lead in matters like this. ... This was our responsibility at this time."

As he left the announcement, Clinton ignored a shouted question about weekend criticism from Republican rival Bob Dole. The GOP presidential hopeful issued a statement supporting U.S. military forces but suggesting that the administration has been weak in its dealings with Saddam.

Despite the use of military force, there was no sense of great overnight drama at the White House. The president apparently was asleep when the attack was underway.

Irbil is in an northern Iraq region under allied protection since the end of the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War. Kurdish factions have been opposing one another in the region, and Iraq forces moved in to support one group against others.

Clinton said Saddam had to be taught that he "cannot just use the Iraqi Army" against the civilian population of Irbil. "Our missiles sent the following message to Saddam Hussein: when you abuse your own people, or threaten your neighbors, you must pay a price."

Clinton said Saddam had ordered a limited pullout from Irbil but that his forces still were in control of the city and that the forces that had withdrawn were now threatening elsewhere. "The present deployments and the things we have seen in support of them convince me that at least he is maintaining the potential to take further military action in the area," Clinton said.

Two Air Force B-52 bombers and two Navy ships in the Persian Gulf launched a total of 27 missiles in the military operation, said several military officials who spoke on condition their names not be used.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV26 Aa ----- Germany: U.S. Missile Attack Was Justif 09-03 4:53p

BC-Germany-US-Iraq, 2nd Ld-Writethru

Germany: U.S. Missile Attack Was Justified

Eds: UPDATES in grafs 6-9 with Greens politician criticizing Clinton, commenting on Turks. Pick up 7th graf pvs bgn, 'Earlier in...

BONN, Germany (AP) - Germany said Tuesday it "completely understands" the U.S. government's reasons for missile strikes against Iraq and that an escalation of hostilities must be avoided.

"The federal government condemned Iraq's military actions (against Kurds) from the very start," said Peter Hausmann, spokesman for Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Therefore, the government "completely understands today's American reaction," Hausmann said.

He said Iraq must "immediately and completely withdraw its troops" from a designated northern safe haven for Kurds and "cease all use of force against Kurdish civilians."

He said Germany "expects that everything will be done to avoid an escalation."

Aa politician with Germany's pacifist Greens party said Clinton's decision to fire cruise missiles into Iraq has more to do with getting re-elected than helping Kurds.

"Clinton's order to attack Iraqi positions ... is due more to the election campaign," said Angelika Beer, the Greens' defense specialist.

She pointed out that no country intervened when Turkey launched military operations against Kurds in northern Iraq earlier this year.

She said "bombs on Baghdad" are not the answer to helping Kurds, and what's needed instead is an international commitment to improving their plight.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said the U.S. missile strikes were an "appropriate and justified" response to Saddam Hussein's attacks on Kurds.

"The Iraqis violated the northern Iraq safe zone and brought about a major bloodbath among the Kurdish populace," Kinkel said in a statement released by his office.

Kinkel said, "Like our partners and friends, we are of the opinion that the American reaction was appropriate and justified."

Kinkel said the U.S. government had informed Germany about the attack, but he did not say whether Bonn got advance notice.

Warren Christopher, the U.S. secretary of state, plans to be in Germany on Friday. Kinkel said the visit will provide the opportunity to "comprehensively and intensively discuss the matter."

(tp-lak)

031354 Sep GMT

[Kurdish]

APW VVV26 Aa ----- U.S. Slams Cruise Missiles Into Iraq fo 09-03 5:00p

BC-US-Iraq, 6th Ld-Writethru

U.S. Slams Cruise Missiles Into Iraq for Kurdish Attacks

Eds: UPDATES with Pentagon briefing; Edits to tighten.

By SUSANNE M. SCHAFER

AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bill Clinton unleashed 27 cruise missiles at military targets in southern Iraq early Tuesday, punishing Saddam Hussein for attacking Kurds in a protected zone in northern Iraq. "Reckless acts have consequences," Clinton said.

Two U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers and two Navy ships in the Persian Gulf launched the missiles in the military operation, said Air Force Gen. Joseph Ralston, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said in an interview on CNN that the strikes killed five people and wounded 19 others, including some civilians, according to initial Iraqi military reports.

At a Pentagon briefing, Defense Secretary William Perry called the action not only a response to Iraq's military moves in the north, but also a preemptive action against potential threats to Iraq's neighbors.

And Perry said the matter may not be closed. "We certainly reserve the right to conduct future military actions," he told reporters, adding that the determining factor "will be the actions of the Iraqis in the coming days."

Perry said the extension of the no-fly zone in southern Iraq to just outside Baghdad will "position coalition forces to more effectively deter any further military adventures" Saddam might consider.

Ralston discounted claims by Iraqis that many of the U.S. missiles were shot down. "We certainly have no evidence of that," said Ralston, although he said a complete assessment of the attack had not been completed. He called the strikes effective.

In an address to the nation, Clinton said there still was no evidence that Saddam had moved his troops in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq. "As always with Saddam, it depends on what he does, not what he says."

The administration brushed aside reports quoting Saddam saying he no longer would recognize the no-fly zones. Indeed, Clinton said the southern no-fly zone would be extended all the way from the Kuwaiti border north to the outskirts of Baghdad.

The cruise missiles were fired at air defense targets in the vicinity of the Tallil air base in southwestern Iraq, the nearby city of an Nasiriyah on the Euphrates River, the city of al-Iskandariyah just south of Baghdad, and al-Kut, a southern city on the Tigris River. The B-52s escorted by Navy F-14 Tomcat fighters fired 13 cruise missiles; the two Navy ships fired 14.

Targets struck inside Iraq Tuesday included surface-to-air missile sites, radar installations and command-and-control installations, the senior military officer said. No sites in Baghdad were targeted, he added.

The strike came after a hectic weekend mix of campaigning and international diplomacy as Clinton readied military and economic steps against Saddam. And it was not the first time Clinton had crossed swords with Saddam. In 1993, Clinton ordered U.S. warships to fire 24 Tomahawk cruise missiles at intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retaliation for an assassination plot against former President Bush.

Two months out from the presidential election, Tuesday's action could bolster Clinton's image as commander-in-chief. Republican rival Bob Dole has sought to portray Clinton as a weak leader whose lack of military experience has hurt U.S. stature across the globe.

Yet Dole quickly fell into ranks after the attack, declaring, "I stand foursquare behind our men and women in uniform."

However, Dole also said he hoped "this development marks the beginning of decisive action by the United States to curtail the power of Saddam Hussein, and the end of his defiance of the international community and of his atrocities against the Kurdish minority in Iraq."

Early reaction from Congress was supportive.

Republican Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, said, "It's measured and it does send a signal" to Saddam. On NBC television, Congressman Lee Hamilton, ranking Democrat on the International Relations Committee, said the bombings were appropriate.

"It was quite clear Saddam Hussein has been massively violating the rights of his own people. You can't let him get away with that. He must pay a price for it," said Hamilton.

In London Tuesday, the British government said it "fully supports the unequivocal message to Saddam Hussein that repression of innocent civilians ... are unacceptable." Germany and Japan also fell into line, but France and Spain suggested diplomacy would have been a better course.

Asked about the mixed response, Clinton looked uncomfortable and said, "I can only tell you what I believe is right ... and I have done my best to cooperate with others."

The B-52s that took part in the attack had been sent to the Pacific island of Guam over the weekend. The Air Force uses the AGM-86C air-launched cruise missile.

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Both types of cruise missiles are able to follow terrain to their targets, and allow pilots or ships to fire their weapons from hundreds of miles away.

The U.S. military strike came after it appeared Iraqi troops were not pulling back from their original point of attack, the Kurdish city of Irbil, as Clinton had demanded.

Also, the Iraqis were shelling the town of Sham Shamal, and appeared to be preparing to attack it. They also appeared to be continuing their move towards Sulaymaniyah, a senior Pentagon official said.

An administration official said the assault on Irbil was deemed by the United States a violation of U.N. Resolution 688 prohibiting Saddam from oppressing his people.

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^BC-Iraq-Captive City,0913<

^Iraqi Flag Flies Over Parliament Guarded by Iraqi Soldiers in Irbil<

^Eds: Associated Press reporter Yalman Onaran was one of the first journalists to reach Irbil after weekend fighting.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi soldiers guarded the Parliament building Tuesday and victorious Kurdish guerrillas patrolled the streets while the boom of shellfire echoed outside the city captured over the weekend by Saddam Hussein.

With most shops shuttered, the Kurdish residents of the city of million lined up for water and purchased daily necessities like tomatoes, peppers and eggplants in open bazaars and from street vendors. Big chunks of meat hung in the open-air butcher shops.

The wind filled customers' eyes with dust as 40C (104 F) heat baked the streets. Clad in baggy pants of a plain, thin material and long-sleeved shirts, the people of Irbil filled teahouses to treat themselves to sweet drinks and company.

The city had neither power nor water. Visible damage seemed limited to buildings abandoned by the Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. A guerrilla with its Iraqi-backed rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said his faction's dead totaled 70. Civilian casualties were unavailable, but there was no unusual bustle at hospitals.

Residents said there had been no clashes since Saturday. The fighting between the two Kurdish rivals had moved south.

From the outskirts of Irbil, the largest city in the U.S.-imposed no-fly zone in northern Iraq, tons of heavy shelling could be heard from the south.

There was no sign of Baghdad troops surrounding the city. Iraqi tanks were no longer in sight, and truck convoys loaded with KDP fighters were heading south.

"We will attack Sulaymaniyah tonight, God willing," said one KDP guerrilla.

The PUK, driven from Irbil, retreated Saturday to Sulaymaniyah, the second biggest city in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Forty to 50 Iraqi tanks and perhaps 15 trucks carrying Iraqi soldiers left Irbil on Monday, said Hiwa Hikmat Sahin, a resident of the Sduburban Shukka Ishan district.

Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, said troops completed their withdrawal from the Irbil region on Tuesday, several hours before the U.S. sent missiles streaking toward Iraq.

Aziz denied Baghdad planned to attack other areas in Kurdistan, telling CNN that U.S. and rebel claims that Iraqi forces were moving on other cities in the Kurdish region were "totally baseless."

The U.S. ordered the strike in retaliation for Saddam's assault on Irbil on Saturday, Saddam's biggest military foray since the 1991 Gulf War.

Residents said few, if any, civilians were killed in Saturday's strike.

"They fight each other," said 60-year-old Dawud Abdullah, interviewed at his two-room house. "There were clashes in the streets, but if you stayed home, you did not get hurt." Abdullah did note that the propeller of a hand-launched rocket fell in his garden Saturday. No one was injured.

Hospital officials could not be questioned about the injured, there was little activity at Irbil's two major hospitals. The KDP fighter said 70 guerrillas from his side were killed.

Instead of queuing up to hear about injured relatives, hundreds of women and children holding empty buckets crowded at the Rizgari hospital gate, waiting to get water. It was a common scene all around town, where there has been no running water or electricity since Saturday.

Some KDP officials said a hydroelectric dam was hit by artillery and damaged, causing the power failure. Others said the rival PUK had control of the dam and was not allowing power to flow.

The victorious KDP took over the rival faction's television station but could not resume broadcasting for lack of power.

The city bore few signs of heavy fighting. Only PUK-related buildings were spattered with bullet holes. Some were darkened by fires started by small rockets. Others had broken windows. With no traffic lights working, police directed cars on the streets.

While Irbil has the air of a major city, it has few high rises by Western standards. Only a few 10- to 12-story buildings show in its silhouette. Families living in the back streets squeeze into one-room shanties without plumbing.

Ten Iraqi soldiers armed with machine guns guarded the Parliament building, where two anti-aircraft guns had been placed atop the roof. An Iraqi flag replaced the PUK banner that had flown overhead. Iraqi flags have been scarce in the Kurdish-controlled region since the establishment of the U.N.-protected zones in 1991.

People said the new bosses were treating them well.

"I do not care which rules. They are all the same. I just want to work and feed my two daughters," said Abdullah, a maintenance man who says he's been jobless for three years.

"Yesterday, Saddam's soldiers knocked on my door asking for food. They had dinner with us and they left. No bad treatment," Abdullah said. "Even Saddam can rule and I don't care."

His indifference reflected the mood of Irbil residents caught between rival rebel groups.

"I am always scared each time there is a new fighting," said Rabia Musa Kadir, an elderly woman seated in a wheelchair in her home. "But what can I do? One comes, one goes, over and over."

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 ^Allied Force Moves Military Center From Northern Iraq<
 ^EDS: UPDATES with quotes from European Command, NGOs leaving
 northern Iraq, ADDs reaction from Iraqi Kurdish rival groups, ADDS
 byline<
 ^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=
 ^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The U.S.-led air force protecting Iraqi Kurds pulled its military coordination center out of northern Iraq on Tuesday.

"In view of the heightened tension, they thought it was becoming unsafe to stay there," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Michael Shavers, a spokesman at Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey.

But others believed the move was done to protest an Iraqi Kurdish group's alliance with Baghdad against a rival Kurdish faction. Saddam Hussein's forces began moving against the faction last week and the United States responded Tuesday with cruise missile strikes on Iraqi targets.

U.S. Army Maj. Lou Boone, European command spokesman in Stuttgart, Germany, told The Associated Press that President Clinton gave the order for the withdrawal of the military coordination center (MCC) in cooperation with other members of the allied force.

Twenty-one soldiers _ American, Turkish, French and British _ moved from Zakho to the Turkish town of Silopi, about 10 kilometers (six miles) from the border, said Shavers.

Boone said the private aid agencies were offered safe passage into Turkey. "They can stay if they take their own risks," Boone added.

The coordination center oversees the work of private aid agencies in northern Iraq. It also monitored the needs of Iraqi Kurds, who set up a semi-autonomous state following the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The allied warplanes protecting the region are based at Incirlik.

There are dozens of private aid agencies in northern Iraq.

Turkish governments have long supported the idea of moving the center to Turkey, but Washington had been firmly against it.

Turkey had concerns that the private aid groups were helping Turkish Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy from bases in northern Iraq.

A Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the move appeared to be a result of the Kurdistan Democratic Party's cooperation with Baghdad against the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, is in control of the parts of northern Iraq near the Turkish border, including Zakho.

Shavers told The Associated Press that the coordination team would stay at Silopi "for the foreseeable future."

"It is a temporary relocation. Options are open," Boone said. He did not elaborate.

Safeen Dizayhee, the KDP spokesman here, criticized the MCC's withdrawal from northern Iraq. "For months, we have been telling Americans about the Iranian activities but they have turned the deaf ear," Dizayhee said. "If they're trying to penalize KDP, it is not the right way to do it."

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Oil Pipeline To Turkey Called Saddam's Achilles' Heel
EO-DJI e-DBA00196

By Mark Reynolds

DUBAI (AP-Dow Jones)--A 20-kilometer stretch of pipeline is the Achilles' heel that tripped up a multibillion-dollar aid program for Saddam Hussein's beleaguered Iraq, Persian Gulf-based oil analysts suggested Tuesday.

The short stretch of pipeline in Kurd-controlled territory in northern Iraq is the critical link in a 920-kilometer conduit connecting Kirkuk, Iraq, and the Turkish port of Ceyhan, a Dubai-based analyst said, speaking anonymously.

"The pipeline goes right through the Kurdish area, and (Saddam) was obviously working to guarantee its security when the United States reacted," the analyst added.

The pipeline is Iraq's main oil-export route, and Baghdad will have to use it to pump the bulk of any crude to be sold under a so-called oil-for-food-deal brokered by the United Nations (U.N.). That deal, which would have seen Iraq pump \$1 billion worth of oil every 90 days for an initial 180-day period, has now been suspended by U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"(The pipeline) is in territory controlled by forces opposed to Saddam, and he wanted to guarantee the pipeline's security before the oil began flowing again," the Dubai-based analyst said. "Some of the Kurds wouldn't have allowed the oil to flow unless the Iraqi government met their demands."

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Oil Pipeline/Saddam -2: Export Suspension Will Hurt Kurds
EO-DJI e-DBA00196a

The critical stretch of pipeline lies in an area controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the analyst said.

In recent days, Saddam's troops sided with the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) to dislodge the PUK from the northern Iraq town of Irbil.

Both groups have been fighting for independence in northern Iraq, but the KDP has been willing to work with Saddam in exchange for greater autonomy, while the PUK demands full independence and has worked with Iran to secure it.

U.S.-led forces created a safe haven in northern Iraq for the Kurds after rebels mounted a failed rebellion against Baghdad in 1991.

Oil analysts noted that the latest U.S. missile attack against Iraq and the suspension of the oil-export deal will damage the Kurds economically. Oil was expected to start flowing before the end of September, with some of the revenue earmarked to pay for food and other humanitarian supplies for the Kurds.

"The deal could now be delayed for months. I would be ... surprised if oil starts flowing before the end of the year," said an Abu Dhabi-based oil trader, speaking anonymously.

"It's good news for us and some of our neighbors," the trader added, referring to Persian Gulf states including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman. These can expect higher crude prices as a result of Iraq's continued absence from the market.

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Oil Pipeline/Saddam -3: Financial Fallout May Hit Turkey

EO-DJI e-DBA00196a

The trader suggested that some of the Persian Gulf states might increase production to fill the gap left by the absence of Iraqi supply.

"Some of them have some extra capacity, so they might be thinking about pumping a bit more," the Abu Dhabi-based trader said.

However, most of those countries are members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which has pledged to control production in order to support prices. At a regular meeting in June, OPEC added 800,000 barrels per day to Iraq's output quota to account for the expected oil-for-food plan.

"It's possible some OPEC member will look to take a share of that quota if Iraq doesn't come into the market," the trader observed.

Oil ministry officials in the Gulf were tight-lipped Tuesday about that prospect.

OPEC isn't scheduled to hold a regular meeting until Nov. 27. No special general meeting will be called, but a subcommittee of the group is due to meet Sept. 25.

Meanwhile, Clinton's suspension of Iraqi oil exports may carry serious financial fallout for Turkey.

Besides collecting fees for the use of its side of the pipeline, Turkey had secured a deal for Turkish companies to supply Iraq with goods upon Baghdad's resumption of oil sales.

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Oil Pipeline/Saddam -4: Port Facilities Also Available

CO-DJI e-DBA00196a

A number of other Middle East states, including Dubai, Qatar and Jordan, also were expecting an economic boost from supplying goods to Iraq.

Oil analysts noted that despite the U.S. attack, Iraq is still in a position to resume oil exports quickly, should permission be forthcoming.

Besides the pipeline to Turkey, Iraq also has repaired its Mina Al-Bakr crude-oil terminal in the Persian Gulf, which was damaged in the 1990-91 Gulf War.

A source at the terminal said Tuesday that operations at the facility were "normal" following the U.S. missile attack.

The terminal is being prepared for shipments of Iraqi crude under the oil-for-food deal.

The deep-sea crude-oil loading terminal at the head of the Persian Gulf is Iraq's only sea-based facility for exporting crude.

The Mina Al-Bakr source said two docks are usable at the port, but he declined to comment on their loading capacity.

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[tehran]
APW VUV23 Aa ----- As Troops Withdraw From Northern City, 09-02 10:01p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld-Writethru,0730
As Troops Withdraw From Northern City, Refugees Tell of Offensive
Eds: RECASTS and UPDATES with color, details from northern Iraq,
Talabani quotes, INCORPORATES material from US-Iraq and
Gulf-Iraq-Oil.
With Kurds-Rivalries.
AP Photos NY191-192,HBR101,BAG1
By YALMAN ONARAN
Associated Press Writer

SALAH AD-DIN, Iraq (AP) - As Iraqi troops pulled back from the northern Kurdish city of Irbil on Monday, refugees who fled to a nearby town described the biggest offensive by Saddam Hussein's army since the Persian Gulf War.

"It was very frightening. Boom here, boom there. Taka-taka-taka. We were scared to death," said Sabira Hamid Hursid, who fled with her four children to Salah ad-Din, 35 kilometers (20 miles) northeast of Irbil.

Iraqi troops did not allow reporters to approach Irbil, where they were pulling out on Monday, leaving their Kurdish allies in control.

But U.N. workers there told The Associated Press that there were still Iraqi tanks in fields five to ten kilometers (three to six miles) outside the city. A U.S. administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the withdrawal was not significant.

White House press secretary Mike McCurry said Saddam must not go unchallenged. The 20,000 U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf region were on high alert, and Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, traveled to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Saudi Arabia agreed to cooperate in any U.S. retaliatory action, Saudi sources said on condition of anonymity.

The offensive prompted the United Nations to delay its plan to let Iraq resume limited oil sales despite sanctions. On Monday, oil prices in Europe jumped sharply on the news; U.S. markets were closed for Labor Day.

Saddam's troops stormed Irbil, the main city in the U.S.-protected Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq, on Saturday. The Kurdistan Democratic Party had asked Iraq for help in dislodging the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Both groups want an independent Kurdish area that would include northern Iraq, but the KDP is willing to work with Saddam's government in exchange for greater autonomy, while the PUK will accept only independence and has allied itself with Iraq's archrival, Iran.

In Salah ad-Din - a stronghold of the KDP - guerrillas celebrated their victory Monday by parading through town and showing off captured artillery.

As a military truck towed two anti-aircraft guns down a street, KDP fighters sat atop the weapons and shouted jubilantly, raising their machine guns above their heads.

Few refugees came to Salah ad-Din; those who arrived said most of the others had fled to PUK-controlled areas and beyond.

"Hundreds, maybe thousands, fled Irbil," Hursid said, "mostly to Iran."

She and her four children, ages 5 to 10, stood on a sidewalk on the road from Irbil to Salah ad-din after fleeing on Sunday.

"I saw many people dead," she said. "My husband was also killed. I ran out with my children, fearing for our lives. I don't know where we will go."

There was no power in the town, and the nighttime streets were dark except for the headlights of military trucks. Some local officials said a hydroelectric dam had been damaged by artillery; others said the rival PUK had control of the dam and had cut their electricity.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani called on Western nations to retaliate against Iraq for the offensive in Irbil.

"Saddam Hussein must be punished and must pay the price of the crimes which he committed inside Irbil," Talabani told The Associated Press by satellite telephone from northern Iraq.

The spokesman for the rival KDP, Sami Abdurrahman, said his party had sought Iraq's help only after Iranian troops had moved into northern Iraq to help the PUK.

"Our rival has sided with Iran," Abdurrahman said at a news conference in northern Iraq. "Iranian troops had been attacking our positions."

Abdurrahman criticized the United States for failing to end PUK attacks against his fighters. The Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq was carved out by the U.S.-led forces to protect the Kurds from Saddam's military after rebels mounted a failed rebellion against Baghdad in 1991.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV24 Aa ----- As Troops Withdraw From Northern City, 09-03 1:47a

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 6th Ld-Writethru,0376

As Troops Withdraw From Northern City, Refugees Tell of Offensive
Eds: LEADS with eight grafs to RECAST lead to ADD U.S.

preparations; ADD White House and Pentagon comment re punishment in
new grafs 5-7. Pickup 6th graf previous, 'The offensive ...'

With Kurds-Rivalries.

AP Photos NY191-192,HBR101,BAG1

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

SALAH AD-DIN, Iraq (AP) - Iraqi troops pulled back from the
northern Kurdish city of Irbil on Monday, but not enough to satisfy
the Clinton administration as it readied punishment for Iraq.

Refugees who fled to a nearby town said they were terrified by
the biggest offensive of Saddam Hussein's army since the Persian
Gulf War.

"It was very frightening. Boom here, boom there.
Taka-taka-taka. We were scared to death," said Sabira Hamid
Hursid, who escaped with her four children to Salah ad-Din, 35
kilometers (20 miles) northeast of Irbil.

Iraqi troops did not allow reporters to approach Irbil, where
they were pulling out on Monday, leaving their Kurdish allies in
control.

But U.N. workers there told The Associated Press that there were
still Iraqi tanks in fields five to ten kilometers (three to six
miles) outside the city.

White House press secretary Mike McCurry said the Iraqi
redeployment "is not terribly significant because they still have
a significant force arrayed around Irbil."

"Our interest is in making sure that Saddam does not believe
that unjustified behavior of this type is cost free," McCurry said
amid increasing speculation that the president would order
retaliation. "Our concern here is what Saddam believes he has
gained from a strategic viewpoint."

Pentagon officials said the preparations for any military steps
ordered by the president had been completed, but that no orders had
been issued.

The 20,000 U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf region were on high
alert, and Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
Staff, traveled to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Saudi Arabia agreed to
cooperate in any U.S. retaliatory action, Saudi sources said on
condition of anonymity.

Pickup 6th graf previous, 'The offensive ...'

022249 Sep GMT

[Kurdish]

APW VVV24 Aa ----- Refugees Tell of Saddam's Offensive, As 09-03 6:26a

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld, 0396

Refugees Tell of Saddam's Offensive, As U.S. Prepares Punishment
Eds: UPDATES in grafs 7-10 with Kurdish faction saying they have
come under shelling outside northeastern town of Sulaymaniyah,
opposition members rounded up.

AP Photos NY191-192, HBR101, BAG1

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

SALAH AD-DIN, Iraq (AP) - Iraqi troops pulled back from the
northern Kurdish city of Irbil, but not enough to satisfy the
Clinton administration as it prepared punishment for Iraq.

Clinton on Monday approved military and economic retribution
against Iraq, a U.S. official in Washington said, speaking on
condition of anonymity. The United States readied its forces and
sought support from allies for a military offensive, but there was
no indication when it would act.

In Iraq, refugees who fled to a nearby town described the terror
of Saddam Hussein's biggest offensive since the Persian Gulf War.

"It was very frightening. Boom here, boom there.
Taka-taka-taka. We were scared to death," said Sabira Hamid
Hursid, who escaped with her four children to Salah ad-Din, 35
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But U.N. workers there told The Associated Press that there were
still Iraqi tanks in fields five to ten kilometers (three to six
miles) outside the city.

The anti-Saddam Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said in a statement
Monday night that its positions outside the northeastern city of
Sulaymaniyah had come under shelling.

It said Iraqi forces, including tanks, were moving in the
direction of Sulaymaniyah, one of the two main Kurdish cities in
the north, along with Irbil. The PUK controls Sulaymaniyah.

The group also said that Iraqi intelligence officials had moved
into Salah ad-Din and rounded up 150 members of the Iraqi National
Congress, an opposition group made up of numerous factions.

There was no independent confirmation of the group's claims.

Meanwhile White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said the
United States saw no signs of an Iraqi withdrawal from Irbil - and
in fact had evidence that Iraq was moving deeper into
Kurd-controlled areas.

McCurry said, 8th graf pvs

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grateful backread of this rewrite of Yalman's story. hope to mov
 soonest.

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u ibx ^AM-Inside Irbil, Bjt,0818<

^Inside Irbil: No Electricity, No Water, Saddam's Kurds In Power<

EDITOR'S NOTE _ Since the first reports that Iraqi troops were
 headed north to oust Kurdish rebels from Irbil, journalists have
 been barred from the city. An AP writer was one of the first to make
 it around Iraqi blockades. Here is his report.<

^With AM-Iraq-Kurds, Bjt<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ When the Iraqi tanks rolled into Irbil,
 residents shuttered their windows and stayed inside. They kept their
 heads down, and Saddam Hussein's most serious military foray since
 the 1991 Persian Gulf War ended the very day it started.

The parliament building showed the clearest signs of Saturday's
 attack, staged to oust Kurdish rebels fighting for an independent
 homeland in northern Iraq and to leave in control Kurds willing to
 cooperate with Baghdad.

The Iraqi flag waved. Two anti-aircraft guns perched on the roof
 Ten armed Iraqis patrolled outside.

Saddam's attack was a direct hit, driving out the Patriotic Union
 of Kurdistan, or PUK, with efficiency. Only PUK buildings were
 scarred by new bullet markings. And Irbil residents said Iraqi tanks
 attacked only the PUK trenches surrounding the city, leaving its
 center _ and most of its civilians _ unharmed.

"Yesterday, Saddam's soldiers knocked on my door asking for
 food," said 60-year-old Dawud Abdullah, an unemployed Kurd. "They
 had dinner with us and they left. No bad treatment."

Aside from the soldiers guarding the parliament building, the
 Iraqi tanks and truckloads of troops were gone Tuesday.

But their campaign to oust the PUK seemed to continue.

At the outskirts of this newly calm city, heavy shelling echoed
 from the south, where PUK rebels fled and where guerrillas with the
 Baghdad-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party followed. Most likely,
 Iraqi soldiers followed, too. The KDP guerrillas have no tanks and
 few heavy artillery, so the powerful booms heard Tuesday could have
 come only from Iraqi weapons.

Iraqi troops stormed Irbil after the Kurdistan Democratic Party
 asked for help ousting the PUK. Both groups want an independent
 Kurdish area that would include northern Iraq. But while the KDP is
 willing to negotiate with Saddam's government, the PUK has allied
 itself with Iraq's archrival, Iran, in its push for total
 independence.

The Iraqi attack Saturday drove PUK forces to Sulaymaniyah, the
 second biggest northern Iraqi city after Irbil.

On Tuesday, trucks loaded with KDP fighters made long convoys
 heading south. "We will attack Sulaymaniyah tonight, God willing,"
 said a KDP guerrilla who refused to give his name.

Most shops remained closed and windows shuttered, but streets
 buzzed with traffic and pedestrians. Strong winds filled people's
 eyes with dust in the 104-degree heat as they bought vegetables and
 chunks of meat from outdoor vendors.

Irbil was almost back to normal, when just the day before some
 40-50 Iraqi tanks and perhaps 15 trucks of Iraqi soldiers had
 occupied the city, resident Miwa Hikmat Sahin said.

Some KDP officials said artillery damaged a hydroelectric dam,
 causing the power failure. Others said the rival Kurdish group was
 controlling the dam and was not allowing electricity.

The Iraqi flag over the parliament building replaced the flag of
 the Patriotic Union. The PUK's television station was now in the
 hands of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, although the power failure
 prevented broadcasts.

A KDP fighter said that 70 guerrillas from his group were killed
 during Saturday's strike, but civilian casualties seemed to be low.
 Residents said there were few, if any, civilians killed.

The hundreds of women and children lined up in front of the
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 soldiers the night before, said of the rival Kurds. He said the
 propeller of a hand-launched rocket fell in his garden Saturday, but
 no one was injured. "There were clashes in the streets, but if you
 stayed home, you did not get hurt."

Caught in the middle of the rebel groups, he and other Irbil
 residents expressed a certain indifference over which group gains
 control.

"Actually, I do not care which rules," Abdullah said. "They
 all the same. I just want to work and feed my two daughters ...
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An elderly woman agreed.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld-Writethru,0730<

^As Troops Withdraw From Northern City, Refugees Tell of Offensive<

^Eds: RECASTS and UPDATES with color, details from northern Iraq,

Talabani quotes, INCORPORATES material from US-Iraq and

Gulf-Iraq-Oil.<

^With Kurds-Rivalries.<

^AP Photos NY191-192,HBR101,BAG1<

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"Saddam Hussein must be punished and must pay the price of the crimes which he committed inside Irbil," Talabani told The Associated Press by satellite telephone from northern Iraq.

The spokesman for the rival KDP, Sami Abdurrahman, said his part had sought Iraq's help only after Iranian troops had moved into northern Iraq to help the PUK.

"Our rival has sided with Iran," Abdurrahman said at a news conference in northern Iraq. "Iranian troops had been attacking our positions."

Abdurrahman criticized the United States for failing to end PUK attacks against his fighters. The Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq was carved out by the U.S.-led forces to protect the Kurds from Saddam's military after rebels mounted a failed rebellion against Baghdad in 1991.

AP-LD-09-02-96 1902GMT<

BC-Kurds-Chronology,0284

With BC-Iraq-Kurds

By The Associated Press

A brief recent history of the Iraqi Kurds:

1920 - Treaty of Sevres, which carved up the Ottoman Empire after World War I, calls for the creation of a Kurdish state. But the plan collapses and the Kurds are split, mainly among Iran, Iraq, and Turkey.

1931 - Ahmad Barzani, grandfather of current Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani, launches rebellion against Iraq. He is eventually defeated.

1961 - Mustafa Barzani, father of Massoud Barzani, starts a new round of armed resistance against Iraqi rule that lasts for 14 years.

1988 - Iraqi President Saddam Hussein launches scorched-earth campaign against Kurds. Thousands are killed in poison gas attacks.

1991 - In March, shortly after Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War, Kurdish guerrillas seize several key towns in northern Iraq. Baghdad crushes the rebellion, sending some 2 million Kurds fleeing to Iran and Turkey. Thousands die of exposure in the mountains. The United States, Britain and France establish a "safe haven" for Kurds in northern Iraq.

1992 - In May, the first elections for a Kurdish assembly leave Massoud Barzani's KDP and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in a dead heat.

1994 - The two main Kurdish factions begin battling each other, leaving about 2,000 dead before the United States mediates a fragile cease-fire in August 1995.

1996 - On Aug. 17, the main Kurdish rivals resume fighting one another. On Aug. 31, the Iraqi army sends thousands of troops into northern Iraq and captures Irbil, the main city, handing it over to the KDP.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV25 Aa ----- U.S. Slams Cruise Missiles Into Iraq fo 09-03 12:26p

BC-US-Iraq, 8th Ld-Writethru, 0986

U.S. Slams Cruise Missiles Into Iraq for Kurdish Attacks

Eds: RECASTS and UPDATES throughout with more on targets, no more strikes appear planned, no French or British help, background on 1993 attack, other details. Clinton statement expected 8 a.m. EDT (1200 GMT)

By SUSANNE M. SCHAFER

AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The United States unleashed dozens of cruise missiles at military targets in southern Iraq early Tuesday, fulfilling a promise to punish Saddam Hussein for attacking Kurds in a U.N.-designated safe zone in northern Iraq.

Air Force B-52 bombers and two Navy ships in the Gulf launched between 30 to 50 missiles at air defense targets in the military operation, said several military officials who spoke on condition their names not be used. While the British and French help enforce the U.N. no-fly zones in Iraq, they did not take place in the raid, the officials said.

One senior military officer said further strikes would depend upon damage assessments and whether Saddam would ease his attacks on Kurdish strongholds north of the 36th parallel.

"The whole idea is to teach him that aggression doesn't pay, that there will be a cost and he will lose very real military assets if he continues to violate international norms," the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said.

Tuesday's strike appeared to be the only attack to be mounted - at least for the moment - a second Pentagon official said. "The next step will be up to Saddam."

The strike came after a hectic weekend mix of election campaigning and international diplomacy as Clinton readied military and economic steps against Saddam. And it was not the first time Clinton had crossed swords with Saddam. In 1993, Clinton ordered U.S. warships to fire 24 Tomahawk cruise missiles at intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retaliation for an assassination plot against former President Bush.

Targets struck inside Iraq on Tuesday included surface-to-air missile sites, radar installations and command-and-control installations, the senior military officer said. No sites in Baghdad were targeted, he added.

Clinton planned a statement Tuesday morning, followed by a briefing at the Pentagon with Defense Secretary William Perry and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph Ralston.

Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole quickly issued a statement declaring: "I stand foursquare behind our men and women in uniform. I have every confidence in their professionalism and commitment to fulfill their duties. They should know that the thoughts and prayers of every American - for their safety and successful completion of their mission - are with them."

However, in a jab at Clinton, Dole also said he hoped "this development marks the beginning of decisive action by the United States to curtail the power of Saddam Hussein, and the end of his defiance of the international community and of his atrocities against the Kurdish minority in Iraq."

In London, the British government said it "fully supports the unequivocal message to Saddam Hussein that repression of innocent civilians and reckless acts of brutality are unacceptable."

Pentagon officials disclosed the strike about 30 minutes after air raid sirens sounded in Baghdad, saying only that "at the direction of the president, the Department of Defense has launched cruise missiles to attack selected air defense targets in Iraq."

Barely 15 minutes after the Pentagon said the strike had begun, the senior military official said it was over, and that every missiles intended to be launched had been sent on their way.

Normally, it takes several hours - and sometimes days - for a full assessment of target strikes by using spy planes or satellite reconnaissance.

Asked if any U.S. planes had been hit or other losses incurred during the operation, the senior military officer said: "There were no initial reports of anything having gone awry."

The B-52s that took part in the attack had been sent to the Pacific island of Guam over the weekend. The Air Force uses the AGB-86B air-launched cruise missile.

Two U.S. Navy ships in the Persian Gulf - the destroyer USS LaBoon and the cruiser USS Shiloh - launched Tomahawk cruise missiles in the strike, a Pentagon official said.

Both types of cruise missiles are able to follow terrain to their targets, and allow pilots or ships to fire their weapons from hundreds of miles (kilometers) away.

The U.S. military strike came after it appeared Iraqi troops were not pulling back from their original point of attack, the Kurdish city of Irbil, as Clinton had demanded.

Also, the Iraqis were shelling the town of Chamchamal and appeared to be preparing to attack it. They also appeared to be continuing their move towards Sulaymaniyah, a senior Pentagon official said.

On Monday, White House press secretary Mike McCurry accused Saddam of "unjustified behavior" in attacking the Kurdish safe havens in the North and warned the actions would not be "cost-free." The State Department advised Americans to leave Iraq immediately.

McCurry said the United States had evidence Saddam's troops were moving deeper into Kurd-controlled areas. He said it appeared Saddam's objective was Sulaymaniyah, an administrative center for the Kurdish area.

There also was evidence that Iraqi troops were hunting down and killing political opponents in the areas they were seizing.

On Monday, Clinton spoke by phone with French President Jacques Chirac on U.S. plans involving Iraq, McCurry said.

An administration official said the assault on Irbil was deemed by the United States a violation of U.N. Resolution 688 prohibiting Saddam from oppressing his people.

[kurdish]

APW VVV31 Aa ----- Turkey Hints at Strike on Kurdish Rebel 09-04 2:38p

BC-Turkey-Iraq

Turkey Hints at Strike on Kurdish Rebels in Northern Iraq

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey signaled Wednesday that it plans to send troops into northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from taking advantage of the latest turmoil in the region.

The rebels, who belong to the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, keep bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of their fight for autonomy.

"Intelligence reached us that the PKK massed at our border. We have to stop the infiltrations and maintain our security," Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller told reporters. "Necessary measures will be taken," she added.

Mrs. Ciller refused to answer questions. But her remarks indicated that the Turkish military troops were likely to launch a cross border raid.

"There is no ongoing operation now," Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said.

Akbel said Mrs. Ciller's remarks must be "treated as a warning to terrorists."

"We respect Iraq's territorial integrity and political unity," he added.

Iraqi Kurds have maintained a de-facto state in northern Iraq since the end of the Gulf war under the U.S.-led allied protection force.

President Clinton ordered air strikes against Iraq after Saddam Hussein sent in troops against the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil.

Turkish troops have stepped up operations in southeastern Turkey over the past few days. An official statement said 69 PKK rebels were killed in several clashes mostly near the northern Iraqi border.

The largest offensive was launched last year when Turkey dispatched 30,000 soldiers inside northern Iraq for a five-week operation.

(sh-za)

041139 Sep GMT

[Kurdish]

APW VVV27 Aa ----- Iraqi Flag Flies Over Parliament Guarded 09-03 8:03p

BC-Iraq-Captive City, 0913

Iraqi Flag Flies Over Parliament Guarded by Iraqi Soldiers in Irbil

Eds: Associated Press reporter Yalman Onaran was one of the first journalists to reach Irbil after weekend fighting.

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Iraqi soldiers guarded the Parliament building Tuesday and victorious Kurdish guerrillas patrolled the streets while the boom of shellfire echoed outside the city captured over the weekend by Saddam Hussein.

With most shops shuttered, the Kurdish residents of the city of 1 million lined up for water and purchased daily necessities like tomatoes, peppers and eggplants in open bazaars and from street vendors. Big chunks of meat hung in the open-air butcher shops.

The wind filled customers' eyes with dust as 40C (104 F) heat baked the streets. Clad in baggy pants of a plain, thin material and long-sleeved shirts, the people of Irbil filled teahouses to treat themselves to sweet drinks and company.

The city had neither power nor water. Visible damage seemed limited to buildings abandoned by the Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. A guerrilla with its Iraqi-backed rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said his faction's dead totaled 70. Civilian casualties were unavailable, but there was no unusual bustle at hospitals.

Residents said there had been no clashes since Saturday. The fighting between the two Kurdish rivals had moved south.

From the outskirts of Irbil, the largest city in the U.S.-imposed no-fly zone in northern Iraq, tons of heavy shelling could be heard from the south.

There was no sign of Baghdad troops surrounding the city. Iraqi tanks were no longer in sight, and truck convoys loaded with KDP fighters were heading south.

"We will attack Sulaymaniyah tonight, God willing," said one KDP guerrilla.

The PUK, driven from Irbil, retreated Saturday to Sulaymaniyah, the second biggest city in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Forty to 50 Iraqi tanks and perhaps 15 trucks carrying Iraqi soldiers left Irbil on Monday, said Hiwa Hikmat Sahin, a resident of the Sduburban Shukka Ishan district.

Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, said troops completed their withdrawal from the Irbil region on Tuesday, several hours before the U.S. sent missiles streaking toward Iraq.

Aziz denied Baghdad planned to attack other areas in Kurdistan, telling CNN that U.S. and rebel claims that Iraqi forces were moving on other cities in the Kurdish region were "totally baseless."

The U.S. ordered the strike in retaliation for Saddam's assault on Irbil on Saturday, Saddam's biggest military foray since the 1991 Gulf War.

Residents said few, if any, civilians were killed in Saturday's strike.

"They fight each other," said 60-year-old Dawud Abdullah, interviewed at his two-room house. "There were clashes in the streets, but if you stayed home, you did not get hurt." Abdullah did note that the propeller of a hand-launched rocket fell in his garden Saturday. No one was injured.

Hospital officials could not be questioned about the injured, but there was little activity at Irbil's two major hospitals. The KDP fighter said 70 guerrillas from his side were killed.

Instead of queuing up to hear about injured relatives, hundreds of women and children holding empty buckets crowded at the Rizgari hospital gate, waiting to get water. It was a common scene all around town, where there has been no running water or electricity since Saturday.

Some KDP officials said a hydroelectric dam was hit by artillery and damaged, causing the power failure. Others said the rival PUK had control of the dam and was not allowing power to flow.

The victorious KDP took over the rival faction's television station but could not resume broadcasting for lack of power.

The city bore few signs of heavy fighting. Only PUK-related buildings were spattered with bullet holes. Some were darkened by fires started by small rockets. Others had broken windows. With no traffic lights working, police directed cars on the streets.

While Irbil has the air of a major city, it has few high rises, by Western standards. Only a few 10- to 12-story buildings show in its silhouette. Families living in the back streets squeeze into one-room shanties without plumbing.

Ten Iraqi soldiers armed with machine guns guarded the Parliament building, where two anti-aircraft guns had been placed atop the roof. An Iraqi flag replaced the PUK banner that had flown overhead. Iraqi flags have been scarce in the Kurdish-controlled region since the establishment of the U.N.-protected zones in 1991.

People said the new bosses were treating them well.

"I do not care which rules. They are all the same. I just want to work and feed my two daughters," said Abdullah, a maintenance man who says he's been jobless for three years.

"Yesterday, Saddam's soldiers knocked on my door asking for food. They had dinner with us and they left. No bad treatment," Abdullah said. "Even Saddam can rule and I don't care."

His indifference reflected the mood of Irbil residents caught between rival rebel groups.

"I am always scared each time there is a new fighting," said Rabia Musa Kadir, an elderly woman seated in a wheelchair in her home. "But what can I do? One comes, one goes, over and over."

BC-Gulf-Chronology,0517

Chronology of Key Events of Gulf War and Aftermath

Eds: RETRANSMITTING from previous cycle to CORRECT first two items occurred in 1990 instead of 1991

With US-Iraq

By The Associated Press

1990

Aug. 2 - Iraq invades Kuwait.

Aug. 7 - United Nations imposes sanctions on Iraq, which devastate economy. They are still in force.

1991

Jan. 17 - U.S.-led coalition launches air war against Iraq.

Feb. 26 - Allied troops take control of Kuwait after 100-hour ground war.

Feb. 28 - Cease-fire announced.

March 2 - Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq, followed by Kurds in north, rebel against Saddam Hussein's rule. Iraqi army crushes both revolts. But Kurds, protected by the allies, take control of large swath of the north.

Sept. 23 - U.N. weapons inspectors find documents detailing Iraq's nuclear weapons program and say Iraq was close to building a bomb.

1992

Aug. 27 - "No-fly zone" imposed over southern Iraq to stop air attacks on Shiite Muslim rebels. United States and its allies begin air patrols, which continue.

1993

Jan. 7 - United States says Saddam moved surface-to-air missiles into southern Iraq. Baghdad refuses to remove them. Allied warplanes attack Iraqi missile sites and warships fire cruise missiles at nuclear facility near Baghdad.

April 13 - One day before former President George Bush was to arrive in Kuwait, 14 arrests made for plotting to assassinate him; Washington says plot organized by Iraqi intelligence.

June 27 - U.S. warships fire 24 Tomahawk cruise missiles at intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in retaliation for assassination plot. By Iraqi count, eight people die.

1994

Oct. 7 - Iraqi troops move south toward Kuwait. President Clinton dispatches carrier group, 54,000 troops and warplanes to Gulf. Iraqis pull back.

1995

Aug. 8 - Hussein Kamel al-Majid, who headed Iraq's secret drive to build weapons of mass destruction, defects to Jordan with his brother and their wives, both of whom are daughters of Saddam. Al-Majid vows to topple Saddam.

1996

Jan. 6 - Saddam decrees economic austerity measures for Iraq to cope with soaring inflation and widespread shortages caused by U.N. sanctions.

Feb. 20 - Kamel returns to Iraq after providing the United Nations and the United States information about Iraq's arsenal, how Saddam tried to avoid Security Council resolutions and how Saddam's government was organized. He is killed shortly after returning.

May 22 - Iraq reaches deal with United Nations to sell dlrs 2 billion in oil for 180 days to buy food and medicine.

Aug. 31 - In the face of U.S. warnings, Saddam sends tanks, troops and helicopters into northern Iraq, capturing a key city inside the Kurdish "safe haven" protected by U.S.-led forces.

Sept. 2 - U.S. ships and airplanes fire dozens of cruise missiles at military targets in a stated move to punish the Iraq military and discourage it from following Saddam.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV29 Aa ----- Clinton Wanted Allies' Support, But Was 09-04 5:36a

BC-US-Iraq-Diplomacy,0891

Clinton Wanted Allies' Support, But Was Prepared To Go It Alone

Eds: RECAPS pvs with new 10th graf to ADD new missile strikes

With US-Iraq

By BARRY SCHWEID

AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - When the calls and cables went out around the world over the weekend, President Clinton had already made up his mind. Iraq must be punished - severely.

And while the president and his top advisers would have preferred a stronger show of support from allies than the missile attack on Iraq mustered, there was no cajoling. In fact, the United States would have gone it alone - if need be.

And it would again, judging by the harsh statements Tuesday by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and other American officials.

"Our response must be and will be forceful and immediate," Christopher said, denouncing Iraqi president Saddam Hussein as an unyielding threat to his people, his neighbors and to stability in the Middle East.

As it turned out, Britain, Germany, Canada, Japan and a few others registered public support following the cruise missile assault. Many others, led by Russia and France, registered reservations - and disapproval.

"The government of Russia considers the American military operation an unacceptable reaction to the latest events in northern Iraq," an official government statement said in Moscow.

French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said dialogue between Iraq and the Kurds is "the only way to contribute, by a political solution, to the return to calm and stability in Iraqi Kurdistan."

Egypt and Syria, which sent 55,000 troops to fight Iraq in 1991, predicted the U.S. attack would only worsen the plight of Iraqis, who are suffering under U.N. sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Balanced against such displeasure were strong public statements from British Prime Minister John Major, who defended the United States as completely justified in firing 27 missiles at military targets, and several other government leaders who concur in the American government's contempt for Saddam Hussein.

In what the Pentagon described as a "mop-up" operation, the United States said Tuesday night it had fired 17 more missiles at Iraqi air defense sites because critical targets weren't destroyed in the first raid.

Britain shares with the United States responsibility for maintaining a no-fly zone over northern Iraq to protect the Kurds, long a target of Baghdad's wrath and, according to State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, the target of an extermination campaign by Saddam five years ago.

France also shares that responsibility, so its exception to Clinton's decision rattles the fragile alliance.

Christopher, on a trip previously arranged, will try to repair the damage Thursday in Paris over lunch with Foreign Minister Herve de Charette and in a call on President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace.

Burns confidently offered assurances that "the international coalition is intact," and diplomatic sources said France had neither opposed nor supported the decision when Christopher spoke with de Charette by telephone over the weekend and Clinton called Chirac before ordering the attack.

Clinton did not seek Chirac's advice, said the sources, who declined to be identified. He had also made the decision to strike at Iraq, but he also said he would welcome French support, U.S. sources said.

France contends that Saddam did not violate the no-fly zone when he sent tanks, troops and helicopters into northern Iraq on Saturday and that Iraq's territorial integrity should be observed.

Israel's foreign ministry expressed its support for the U.S. action, noting that "Israel is the only state in the region which is directly threatened by Iraq."

Russia and the Arabs are key dissenters. Like the French, though, Moscow was told the attack would proceed whatever Russia's reservations. The United States asked for understanding, and for diplomatic pressure on Iraq to relent in its drive in the Kurdish region.

In the Arab world, only Kuwait, liberated from Saddam's occupation by a U.S.-led coalition in 1991, expressed public support for the U.S. assault. Privately, however, Saudi Arabia did not object, the U.S. official told The Associated Press.

The Saudis - who met over the weekend with Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff - also supported the U.S. proposal to expand the no-fly zone in southern Iraq. However, for fear of embarrassment, they asked the United States not to fly its planes from Saudi territory.

"They pointed out the obvious, what we already know, which is that we had alternatives, and they would prefer we use the alternatives," said Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon.

However, they made it clear that the United States could fly from Saudi territory in the future to maintain the no-fly zone.

The Saudis' cautious public demeanor is well known to U.S. administrations that look to the oil-rich kingdom as a moderating force in the Arab world.

"What one hears in private is often dramatically different from what one hears in public," said Burns, an Arabic-speaker with diplomatic experience in the Middle East.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV30 Aa ----- Second Missile Attack Clears Way for Wi 09-04 10:09a

BC-US-Iraq, 6th Ld-Writethru,0885

Second Missile Attack Clears Way for Wider U.S. Air Patrols Over Iraq

Eds: RECASTS throughout with details, Clinton comments, opinion poll. CHANGES byline. ADDS photo numbers. Lead planned following Pentagon briefing, scheduled for 7:10 a.m. EDT (1110 GMT)

AP Photos WX101,102

By LAWRENCE L. KNUTSON

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Saying its initial strike fell short, the United States launched a second missile attack against Iraqi air-defense targets Wednesday.

It was described as a "mop-up operation" to make sure U.S. warplanes may patrol unchallenged over an expanded "no-fly" zone.

The White House said the new attack with 17 sea-launched cruise missiles - the second in 24 hours - was needed to obliterate targets not destroyed in the initial U.S. operation Tuesday morning against Saddam Hussein's defenses.

Press Secretary Mike McCurry said the second attack also was necessary "to ensure the safety of aircraft and crews operating in the expanded no-fly zone" over southern Iraq. The intent was to reinforce the buffer between Saddam's air force and oil-rich Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, officials said.

The United States was ready to begin enforcing the new exclusion zone for Iraq's air force Wednesday at noon Baghdad time. There were no immediate indications that Saddam planned any retaliatory moves.

An administration official said cloud cover Tuesday over Iraq made it impossible to determine the extent of damage from the first attack, so in order to ensure that the air-defense sites were destroyed, the second strike was ordered.

"This is what we would call a mop-up operation," Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said.

The Defense Department confirmed Iraqi reports of five Iraqi deaths from the first attack, but Bacon rejected claims by Iraqi officials that a missile struck a housing complex.

The two attacks followed Saddam's bloody assaults on the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil in the North.

Speaking shortly before the second burst of missiles was launched, President Clinton said the military response was aimed at ending "a broad pattern of violence and recklessness by Saddam against the Kurds, against other ethnic minorities, against Iraq's neighbors."

Addressing a cheering audience at a meeting of the National Guard Association, Clinton said:

"Our objectives ... are limited, but our interests are clear: To demonstrate once again that reckless acts have consequences. To reduce Saddam's ability to strike out again at his neighbors. To increase America's ability to prevent future acts of violence and aggression."

McCurry said later that Saddam's troops near the Kurdish stronghold of Irbil in northern Iraq were on the move, but said: "We don't see any indication of a buildup that would indicate a strike or offensive intention, but we're still analyzing."

France, Spain, Russia and China objected to the first attack, and Saudi Arabia refused to allow Saudi-based U.S. planes to take part in the assault. But Britain, Germany and Japan applauded Clinton's action.

Clinton announced after the initial cruise missile attack that the air exclusion zone would be expanded about 70 miles (110 kms) further north, to the 33rd parallel. That would take it to the suburbs of Bagdad, where a defiant Saddam ordered his armed forces to shoot down any foreign aircraft in Iraqi airspace.

With the presidential election just two months away, McCurry quickly volunteered that the president had instructed aides to ignore the political impact of the decision to attack Iraq. Military actions often produce a rally-round-the-flag response among Americans that benefits the president, particularly when there are no U.S. casualties.

Early indications were that the public supported Clinton's moves against Saddam. Seventy-three percent said they approved of the way Clinton was handling the situation, and nearly eight in 10 Americans approved of the first missile attack, according to an ABC News poll released late Tuesday.

Late Tuesday, Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole, who has been critical of Clinton's policy towards Iraq, reiterated his support for the U.S. forces. But he added:

"We must await further information to determine not only the success of this action in a military sense, but its success in accomplishing the larger goals the United States must achieve in Iraq." He included among those goals the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from the North and release of Kurdish prisoners, as well as a halt to interference by Iran and Iraq in the dispute between rival Kurd factions.

In the initial assault Tuesday, American warships standing off Iraq, augmented by a pair of B-52 bombers, fired 27 satellite-guided cruise missiles at radar and air-defense targets in southern Iraq.

In the second attack, an additional 17 cruise missiles were fired from three U.S. Navy ships and one submarine located in the Gulf.

The sea-launched cruise missiles were fired from the destroyer USS Russell, the destroyer USS Hewitt, the guided missile destroyer USS Laboon and the submarine USS Jefferson City, all in the Gulf.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV30 Aa ----- A Defiant Saddam Could Force Tougher U. 09-04 10:05a

BC-ANALYSIS-Saddam's Move,0723

A Defiant Saddam Could Force Tougher U.S. Attacks

An AP News Analysis

By DONALD M. ROTHBERG

AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - In the deadly Gulf chess game, it's Saddam Hussein's move. A tactical retreat buys him time. Defiance forces President Clinton to choose from options riskier than firing missiles at Iraq from a distance.

"This episode isn't really over," said James A. Baker III, who was secretary of state during the Gulf War. "We're going to have to do other things, and are we going to have the coalition with us?"

When Saddam probes, he tests not only U.S. resolve, but the endurance of the coalition of nations that defeated him in 1991.

That broad international coalition formed after Iraq occupied Kuwait is showing signs of wear. Although they fought alongside the United States to force Iraq out of Kuwait, Egypt and Syria criticized Tuesday's U.S. missile strike on military facilities in southern Iraq.

France, a U.S. partner with Britain in the coalition that enforces the "no-fly" zones for Saddam's air force over northern and southern Iraq, refused to back the U.S. action. So did Russia.

"I think it's very clear to us here in Washington this morning that the international coalition against Saddam Hussein is intact," insisted Nicholas Burns, State Department spokesman. He suggested that some of the critics were privately pleased by the strike against Iraq.

That theory could well be tested in the coming days and weeks. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was leaving Wednesday on a previously scheduled trip to Europe that includes stops in Britain, France and Germany. Iraq is certain to be discussed.

Despite the bombing, no one expects Saddam to throw up his hands and give in to demands that he stop threatening his neighbors and persecuting Iraqi Kurds. In the past, when the Iraqi leader has pulled back, it was only to fight or probe another day.

In a speech from the White House, Clinton said Saddam's army remained in the Kurdish city of Irbil, despite claims it was withdrawing. Defense Secretary William Perry said Iraqi forces were moving toward two other Kurdish towns.

Saddam also declared his forces would no longer observe the coalition-imposed no-fly zones.

If Iraqi forces don't halt their aggression against the Kurds, and if his antiaircraft batteries fire on planes enforcing the no-fly zones, what's the response from the United States? And will other nations support it?

Clinton has no shortage of advice.

"If he doesn't move those tanks from north of the 36th (parallel) we ought to give some consideration to taking out some of those tanks with smart bombs, laser-guided munitions," Baker said. "But, of course, you do put some pilots at risk when you do that."

Sen. Dick Lugar, a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, advocated an intensive air campaign against Iraq.

"We have an ample opportunity, while we are at it, to seek out the elements of Saddam's military power and to destroy as many of them through air strikes as we can, and we ought to do so systematically and comprehensively," Lugar said.

Richard Haass, a Middle East expert on the National Security Council in the Bush White House and now director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution, warned that the situation in northern Iraq was complicated.

"There are a lot of people in the region who don't mind seeing Iraq hit some Kurds," Haass said. As for criticism that Clinton could have done more to prevent the situation from reaching this point, Haass said, "It's hard to know what more could have been done. In the past we've learned that Saddam tends to discount our warnings."

One of the complicating factors is that the current crisis in northern Iraq resulted from the rivalry between Kurdish factions. One group has backing from Iran, and the other invited Saddam to come to its aid.

Sen. Phil Gramm supported the U.S. air strike but cautioned against getting involved in the Kurdish internal struggle, saying the United States had no inherent interest in it.

EDITOR'S NOTE - Donald M. Rothberg covers foreign policy for The Associated Press.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV27 Aa ----- Allied Force Moves Military Center From 09-03 8:27p

BC-Turkey-US-Iraq, 1st-Ld, Writethru

Allied Force Moves Military Center From Northern Iraq

EDS: UPDATES with quotes from European Command, NGOs leaving northern Iraq, ADDs reaction from Iraqi Kurdish rival groups, ADDS byline

By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR

Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - The U.S.-led air force protecting Iraqi Kurds pulled its military coordination center out of northern Iraq on Tuesday.

"In view of the heightened tension, they thought it was becoming unsafe to stay there," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Michael Shavers, a spokesman at Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey.

But others believed the move was done to protest an Iraqi Kurdish group's alliance with Baghdad against a rival Kurdish faction. Saddam Hussein's forces began moving against the faction last week and the United States responded Tuesday with cruise missile strikes on Iraqi targets.

U.S. Army Maj. Lou Boone, European command spokesman in Stuttgart, Germany, told The Associated Press that President Clinton gave the order for the withdrawal of the military coordination center (MCC) in cooperation with other members of the allied force.

Twenty-one soldiers - American, Turkish, French and British - moved from Zakho to the Turkish town of Silopi, about 10 kilometers (six miles) from the border, said Shavers.

Boone said the private aid agencies were offered safe passage into Turkey. "They can stay if they take their own risks," Boone added.

The coordination center oversees the work of private aid agencies in northern Iraq. It also monitored the needs of Iraqi Kurds, who set up a semi-autonomous state following the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The allied warplanes protecting the region are based at Incirlik.

There are dozens of private aid agencies in northern Iraq.

Turkish governments have long supported the idea of moving the center to Turkey, but Washington had been firmly against it.

Turkey had concerns that the private aid groups were helping Turkish Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy from bases in northern Iraq.

A Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the move appeared to be a result of the Kurdistan Democratic Party's cooperation with Baghdad against the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, is in control of the parts of northern Iraq near the Turkish border, including Zakho.

Shavers told The Associated Press that the coordination team would stay at Silopi "for the foreseeable future."

"It is a temporary relocation. Options are open," Boone said. He did not elaborate.

Safeen Dizayhee, the KDP spokesman here, criticized the MCC's withdrawal from northern Iraq. "For months, we have been telling Americans about the Iranian activities but they have turned the deaf ear," Dizayhee said. "If they're trying to penalize KDP, it is not the right way to do it."

(fd)

[Kurdish]

APW VVV27 Aa ----- Security Council To Consider Iraqi Sanc 09-03 8:00p

BC-UN-Iraq, 2nd Ld-Writethru,0633

Security Council To Consider Iraqi Sanctions Tuesday

Eds: UPDATES throughout with Kurds asking for protection, Clinton comment on oil-for-food plan.

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - The northern Iraqi city of Irbil was reported quiet Tuesday after Iraq withdrew tanks and troops from the city, but frightened Kurds in another area are begging U.N. officials for protection, a U.N. spokesman said.

The United States requested the Security Council meet later Tuesday to discuss developments in Iraq after President Clinton unleashed 27 cruise missiles against targets in southern Iraq following Iraqi attacks on Irbil.

The 15-member council had been scheduled to meet to renew economic sanctions against Iraq, imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. But deputy U.S. Ambassador Edward Gnehm said he asked that the agenda be expanded to discuss other developments in the crisis.

The deal, which had been expected to go into effect this month, would allow Iraq to sell dlrs 2 billion worth of oil every 180 days to buy food and medicine for its people.

But President Clinton said the United States would block the plan "until we are sure these humanitarian supplies can actually get to those who need them."

The oil-for-food plan is a U.N. rather than a U.S. program. But opposition by the United States or any of the other four permanent Security Council members could effectively block its implementation.

In a briefing to reporters, U.N. spokesman Sylvana Foa said U.N. staff in Irbil reported that the city was quiet and returning to normal three days after the Iraqi incursion.

"The shops are open, people seem to be going about their business as usual," Foa said. "Our U.N. personnel in Irbil say that it appears to them that all (Iraqi) tanks and troops have withdrawn from the city. We do not know what is going on in the rest of the zone."

She said residents of Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest city in the region after Irbil, were "nervous."

"Yesterday, there was a demonstration in front of the U.N. offices in Sulaymaniyah, a couple of windows were broken, people were asking for protection," she said. There were no reports of fighting near the city, she added.

Foa said the U.N. World Food Program had suspended some of their humanitarian operations in northern Iraq because of fighting between rival Kurdish factions.

She said some major roads in the area had been closed.

"They bring in all the food for the whole country including central and southern Iraq from Turkey," Foa said. "So if the roads in the north are affected by fighting, it could affect their ability to bring food into the entire country."

Iraq accepted the oil-for-food plan June 20, and it had been expected to go into effect within weeks. The plan stipulates that about dlrs 115 million worth of supplies purchased with oil revenues be earmarked for Iraqi Kurds.

U.N. officials cited instability in northern Iraq and the safety of U.N. employees in deciding to delay sending out 14 oil monitors and 32 customs officials. Their presence is necessary for the oil-for-food deal to take effect.

In a statement after the U.S. attack, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said he was "concerned over the impact of the latest events, which clearly will adversely affect the implementation of programs for humanitarian assistance."

"The secretary-general hopes that tensions will quickly subside so that we can get on with our work of alleviating the suffering which affects all segments of the Iraqi population," the U.N. statement said.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV30 Aa ----- Oil-For-Food Deal May Become Casualty o 09-04 10:11a

BC-UN-Iraq Oil, 0496

Oil-For-Food Deal May Become Casualty of Iraq Crisis

With: US-Iraq, Iraq-Kurds

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - Iraq's imminent return to world oil markets after six years of crippling sanctions appears to have become a casualty of the latest crisis between the United States and Saddam Hussein.

Last week, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was on the verge of giving the final go-ahead for Iraq to resume oil sales under an agreement Baghdad accepted last June after rejecting it for years.

Then, Saddam sent his troops into the northern Kurdish city of Irbil. The United States responded by firing cruise missiles at Iraqi military targets on Tuesday and Wednesday.

President Clinton then served notice that, for the time being, the "oil-for-food" deal is on hold.

"Until we are sure these humanitarian supplies can actually get to those who need them, the plan cannot go forward, and the Iraqi government will be denied the new resources it has been expecting," Clinton said.

Even before the U.S. attack, Boutros-Ghali announced Sunday he was delaying the arrival of 46 U.N. personnel out of concern for their safety. The personnel were to monitor sales of Iraqi oil and the distribution of food and medicine purchased with the profits.

Those monitors must be in place in Iraq before oil sales can resume.

U.N. diplomats interpreted Clinton's statement as a sign that Washington would use its considerable influence to prevent Iraqi sales until the Americans believe the crisis in northern Iraq is over.

Under the plan, Iraq can export dlr 2 billion worth of oil to buy food and medicine. Iraq has been barred from selling oil under U.N. sanctions imposed after Baghdad invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole has criticized the oil-for-food plan as a reward to a dictator.

But the prospect that the plan might be shelved set off alarm bells among the Russians, French, Turks and others eager to see Iraq resume exports.

Unless it can resume exports, Iraq cannot resume paying off huge debts to Russia and France. Turkey claims the sanctions have cost it dlr 26 billion in lost revenue from trade with Iraq.

Still U.N. officials admit it will be difficult to implement the plan as long as northern Iraq remains unstable, since Irbil was to have been a major hub for distributing food in the north.

U.S. officials insist they are not trying to scrap the oil-for-food agreement and point out the United States helped draft the plan in 1991.

"It is a statement of fact: there is a new situation on the ground," deputy U.S. Ambassador Edward Gnehm said. "It is simply inevitable that the United Nations must look at what has been agreed to insure that the ... food and humanitarian goods go to the people who deserve it."

[Kurdish]

APW VVV31 Aa ----- US Resumes Overflights of Southern Iraq 09-04 2:57p

BC-US-Iraq, 9th Ld-Writethru,0859

US Resumes Overflights of Southern Iraq After Two Missile Strikes

Eds: Combines previous, ADDS byline. Edits to trim.

AP Photos WX101,102

By LAWRENCE L. KNUTSON

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Admitting its initial strike fell short, the United States launched a second missile attack against Iraqi air-defense targets. The Pentagon said the two missile strikes had "sufficiently reduced" the risk to allied pilots, who began patrolling the enlarged no-fly zone early Wednesday.

All told, 44 cruise missiles were fired against 15 sites, all in southern Iraq. The second round, late Tuesday night, was described as a "mop-up operation" against four of the sites.

"If there was any doubt at all" about whether the targets had been destroyed, "we thought it prudent to go back with a restrike," said Air Force Gen. Joseph Ralston, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. '

Ralston said U.S. aircraft began surveillance of the expanded no-fly zone, which reaches to the suburbs of Baghdad, at 0900 GMT. He took pains to add that French and British planes were also part of that operation. The French did not support the cruise-missile strikes, preferring instead more negotiations with Saddam Hussein.

Still, Ralston said Saddam's troops remained near Irbil, the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq. It was those forces which initially triggered U.S. involvement.

"We believe that some force movement has taken place," the general said. "The fact is that Iraqi divisions are still in the vicinity. They are certainly in a position to influence Irbil."

President Clinton's deputy security chief, Sandy Berger, was cautious about whether the bombing was over. "I would not either rule in or rule out further strikes," he said Wednesday on ABC.

The Defense Department confirmed Iraqi reports of five Iraqi deaths from the first attack, but Bacon rejected claims by Iraqi officials that a missile struck a housing complex.

The two attacks followed Saddam's bloody assaults on the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil in the North.

Speaking shortly before the second burst of missiles was launched, President Clinton said the military response was aimed at ending "a broad pattern of violence and recklessness by Saddam against the Kurds, against other ethnic minorities, against Iraq's neighbors."

Addressing a cheering audience at a meeting of the National Guard Association, Clinton said:

"Our objectives ... are limited, but our interests are clear: To demonstrate once again that reckless acts have consequences. To reduce Saddam's ability to strike out again at his neighbors. To increase America's ability to prevent future acts of violence and aggression."

France, Spain, Russia and China objected to the first attack, and Saudi Arabia refused to allow Saudi-based U.S. planes to take part in the assault. But Britain, Germany and Japan applauded Clinton's action.

Clinton announced after the initial cruise missile attack that the air exclusion zone would be expanded about 60 miles (95 kms) further north, to the 33rd parallel. That would take it to the suburbs of Bagdad, where a defiant Saddam ordered his armed forces to shoot down any foreign aircraft in Iraqi airspace.

With the presidential election just two months away, McCurry quickly volunteered that the president had instructed aides to ignore the political impact of the decision to attack Iraq. Military actions often produce a patriotic response among Americans that benefits the president, particularly when there are no U.S. casualties.

Early indications were that the public supported Clinton's moves against Saddam. Seventy-three percent said they approved of the way Clinton was handling the situation, and nearly eight in 10 Americans approved of the first missile attack, according to an ABC News poll released late Tuesday.

Late Tuesday, Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole, who has been critical of Clinton's policy towards Iraq, reiterated his support for the U.S. forces. But he added:

"We must await further information to determine not only the success of this action in a military sense, but its success in accomplishing the larger goals the United States must achieve in Iraq." He included among those goals the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from the North and release of Kurdish prisoners, as well as a halt to interference by Iran and Iraq in the dispute between rival Kurd factions.

In the initial assault Tuesday, American warships standing off Iraq, augmented by a pair of B-52 bombers, fired 27 satellite-guided cruise missiles at radar and air-defense targets in southern Iraq.

In the second attack, an additional 17 cruise missiles were fired from three U.S. Navy ships and one submarine located in the Gulf.

The sea-launched cruise missiles were fired from the destroyer USS Russell, the destroyer USS Hewitt, the guided missile destroyer USS Laboon and the submarine USS Jefferson City, all in the Gulf.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV31 Aa ----- Pilots Patrol Newly Expanded No-Fly Zon 09-04 4:45p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld-Writethru,0915

Pilots Patrol Newly Expanded No-Fly Zone After U.S. Strikes Iraq Again

With US-Iraq

Eds: LEADS throughout to UPDATE with allied pilots begin patrolling expanded no-fly zone, ADDS details, quotes from U.S. official.

DELETES outdated material. No pickup.

AP Photo LON101; AP Graphics IRAQ CONFLICT, US-IRAQ

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - U.S. and allied pilots began patrolling the newly expanded no-fly zone in southern Iraq Wednesday, just hours after the U.S. launched its second missile attack on Saddam Hussein's air-defense system.

Air raid sirens sounded at 5:30 a.m. in Baghdad and wailed for two hours as the United States launched a "mop-up" attack, firing 17 cruise missiles at air-defense targets in southern Iraq. The missiles were launched from U.S. warships and a submarine in the Gulf.

Wednesday's attack followed Monday's firing of 27 cruise missiles and stern warnings from the Clinton administration - all in response to the Iraqi assault against Kurdish rebels in Irbil, the largest city in the northern Iraq's U.S.-protected Kurdish enclave.

Saddam has apparently mounted little defense to the U.S. attacks, despite his earlier bravado, but American officials said that Iraqi troops Wednesday remained uncomfortably near Irbil.

Iraq says the U.S. missile attacks have killed six people, five early Tuesday and one Wednesday morning. Saddam's military forces reported 26 people wounded in the two attacks, but there was no independent confirmation.

"The vengeful aggressors have mounted a second attack," Iraq's armed forces said, claiming that Iraqi defenses shot down several missiles but some "struck military positions and population centers."

American, British and French pilots were taking part in the allied air patrols over the no-fly zone in southern Iraq, which began Wednesday at noon (0900 GMT), said Air Force Gen. Joseph Ralston.

The newly-expanded zone now takes the air patrols north to within 30 miles (50 kms) of Baghdad, and puts two Iraqi airfields and a major training facility under the surveillance of allied forces.

President Clinton declared Tuesday that the southern no-fly zone would be moved up from the 32nd to the 33rd parallel. With a similar zone in north, Saddam is not allowed to fly his warplanes over roughly half of Iraq.

"Like the initial strike, (today's) attack is necessary to ensure the safety of aircraft and crews operating in the expanded no-fly zone," White House spokesman Mike McCurry said in Washington.

While the British supported the American missile attacks, France, with its lucrative business ties with the Iraqis, had supported more negotiations with Saddam.

U.S. officials reported some movement Wednesday of Iraqi troops in the north, but Ralston, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the movement wasn't enough to satisfy the Americans of an improved situation in the north.

The official Iraqi News Agency said Saddam summoned his air defense commanders to a meeting.

"The fact is that Iraqi divisions are still in the vicinity," Ralston said Wednesday in a news conference. "They are certainly in a position to influence Irbil."

Baghdad's main government newspaper, the daily Al-Juhmhouriya, claimed Wednesday that a U.S.-built pilotless plane was shot down in southern Iraq Tuesday. It was not possible to confirm the report.

Clinton ordered the strikes in response to Saddam's weekend assault on Kurdish rebels in Irbil. Some 45,000 Iraqi soldiers and 300 tanks captured the main city in the U.S.-declared Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq before withdrawing this week.

Saddam, in a national television address Tuesday, ridiculed the no-fly zones and ordered his troops to ignore them. "From now on, pay no attention to damned imaginary no-fly zones," he said.

The zones were created after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south from the wrath of Saddam's military.

U.S. officials said Tuesday's attack hit surface-to-air missile sites and radar installations near the Tallil air base in southwestern Iraq, the Euphrates River city of Nasiriyah, al-Iskandariyah and al-Kut.

Iraq's deputy prime minister said Tuesday that the American attack was unjustified, saying Saddam's forces had withdrawn from Irbil "several hours" before the missile strikes. Tariq Aziz also derided U.S. claims that Saddam had violated U.N. Resolution 688, which prohibits the Iraqi leader from oppressing his people.

"I challenge the American administration (to say) upon what basis of international law ... this aggression was being justified," Aziz told CNN.

But U.S. and Kurdish rebel leaders said Iraqi forces had not withdrawn from Irbil before the attack, and fighting continued to the south and east toward Sulaymaniyah.

In addition to the U.S. reprisals, Iraq's attack on Irbil also led the United Nations to suspend an oil-for-food deal with Iraq over the weekend.

Oil prices climbed Tuesday in response to the attack.

The United States and Britain tried to gather support in the Security Council for a resolution condemning Iraq but France and Russia opposed the measure. The council did approve a routine renewal of the economic sanctions against Iraq, as expected.

[Greece]

APW VVV31 Aa ----- Military Patrols Arrest 69 Iraqi Kurds 09-04 5:25p

BC-Greece-Illegal Immigrants, 1st Ld-Writethru

Military Patrols Arrest 69 Iraqi Kurds On Kos

EDs: updates with 4th graf explaining that arrests regular occurrence, not thought to be related to Iraqi fighting

KOS, Greece (AP) - Army and coast guard patrols on this eastern Aegean Sea island Wednesday arrested 69 Iraqi Kurds who had crossed the narrow strait from Turkey illegally.

A coast guard patrol arrested 49 of them at 3.40 a.m. after approaching a motor launch that was sailing without lights near one of the island's capes, the army's general staff office announced.

An army patrol later arrested another seven Iraqi Kurds in the same area. At 6.30 a.m. another army patrol spotted 13 Iraqi Kurds who had been dropped off at another remote spot on the island's coast.

Hundreds of people, mostly Iraqis, are regularly arrested while trying to cross from Turkey into European Union member Greece. Nearly all are economic refugees seeking a better life in the West. Police said the fighting in northern Iraq has not apparently increased the number of people seeking to illegally enter Greece.

Illegal immigrants are usually sentenced to a jail term of a few months and are deported. Those involved in smuggling them often get stiff sentences of more than 10 years.

Greek officials last year arrested 1,890 illegal immigrants on Greek islands near the Turkish coast, out of a total of 9,590 caught entering from Turkey from various points.

From 1992 to 1995, 22,906 illegal immigrants came from Turkey, with 5,361 of them arrested on Greek islands.

nk

041426 Sep GMT

[Kurdish]

APW VVV31 Aa ----- Oil-For-Food Deal May Become Casualty o 09-04 6:11p

BC-UN-Iraq Oil, 1st Ld-Writethru, 0587

Oil-For-Food Deal May Become Casualty of Iraq Crisis

Eds: LEADS with 9 grafs to UPDATE with British support of delay on oil-for-food delay, Russia saying it will veto resolution to condemn Iraqi action.

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - Iraq's imminent return to world oil markets after six years of crippling sanctions appears to have become a casualty of the latest crisis between the United States and Saddam Hussein.

Last week, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was on the verge of giving the final go-ahead for Iraq to resume oil sales under an agreement Baghdad accepted last June after rejecting it for years.

Then, Saddam sent his troops into the northern Kurdish city of Irbil. The United States responded by firing cruise missiles at Iraqi military targets on Tuesday and Wednesday.

President Clinton then served notice that, for the time being, the "oil-for-food" deal is on hold.

"Until we are sure these humanitarian supplies can actually get to those who need them, the plan cannot go forward, and the Iraqi government will be denied the new resources it has been expecting," Clinton said.

Britain's deputy U.N. ambassador Stephen Gomersall agreed. "A return to the status quo is indeed a prerequisite for the implementation of the (plan)," he said.

Even before the U.S. attack, Boutros-Ghali announced Sunday he was delaying the arrival of 46 U.N. personnel out of concern for their safety. The personnel were to monitor sales of Iraqi oil and the distribution of food and medicine purchased with the profits.

Those monitors must be in place in Iraq before oil sales can resume.

Britain has proposed the Security Council condemn Iraq's incursion and demand an immediate troop withdrawal from the north. Russia said Wednesday it would veto the resolution, which did not mention the U.S. missile attacks on southern Iraq.

U.N. diplomats have interpreted Clinton's statement as a sign that Washington would use its considerable influence to prevent Iraqi sales until the Americans believe the crisis in northern Iraq is over.

Under the plan, Iraq can export dlr 2 billion worth of oil to buy food and medicine. Iraq has been barred from selling oil under U.N. sanctions imposed after Baghdad invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole has criticized the oil-for-food plan as a reward to a dictator.

But the prospect that the plan might be shelved set off alarm bells among the Russians, French, Turks and others eager to see Iraq resume exports.

Unless it can resume exports, Iraq cannot resume paying off huge debts to Russia and France. Turkey claims the sanctions have cost it dlr 26 billion in lost revenue from trade with Iraq.

Still U.N. officials admit it will be difficult to implement the plan as long as northern Iraq remains unstable, since Irbil was to have been a major hub for distributing food in the north.

U.S. officials insist they are not trying to scrap the oil-for-food agreement and point out the United States helped draft the plan in 1991.

"It is a statement of fact: there is a new situation on the ground," deputy U.S. Ambassador Edward Gnehm said. "It is simply inevitable that the United Nations must look at what has been agreed to to insure that the ... food and humanitarian goods go to the people who deserve it."

ANF0330-----

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Just managed to reach Jalal Talabani on fone.

He says Iraqi tanks are still inside and surrounding irbil.

"we have lost total control of irbil. now, the iraqi tanks are controlling irbil. they have vacated a district called akawa (?) where office of U.N. is. But inside and in surrounding areas there are stills more than 250 iraqi tanks."

"I don't know how many soldiers there are."

"This is only a propaganda fabrication by saddam hussein to avoid any kind of punishment but (the reports that troops have left) is not true".

"saddam hussein must be punished, and must pay the price of his crimes which he committed inside irbil." he didn't elaborate.

"there is no iranian troops in irbil neither inside nor on the border, this is a lie fabricated by saddam hussein.

"my wife, Hero, has been taken as hostage by Barzani. I don't know where she is."

"there are members of kurdish parliament inside erbil, they were arrested by barzani forces. today dr fuat mahsoun, prime minister of regional government of kurdistan was arrested."

"Iraqi troops and barzani mercenaries have looted thousands of houses, they destroyed the building of Iraqi National Congress, the Turcoman party buildings were looted, the communist party building was destroyed. Shops were looted."

"They are going to turn irbil into a new Kuwait".

"there still is shelling, iraqi government is shelling from Khoshtapa, the village of distana and that area. "

"we are intending to defend our places and prepare ourselves against a counter-attack against the iraqi army, not against irbil."

best rgds,
ankara- sf

AP-LD-09-02-96 1217GMT<

[Kurds]

APW VVV32 Aa ----- Oil-For-Food Deal May Become Casualty o 09-04 7:28p

BC-UN-Iraq Oil, 2nd Ld-Writethru,0598

Oil-For-Food Deal May Become Casualty of Iraq Crisis

Eds: UPDATES with comment by UN official, trims.

By ROBERT H. REID

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Those monitors must be in place in Iraq before oil sales can resume.

U.N. diplomats have interpreted Clinton's statement as a sign that Washington would use its considerable influence to prevent Iraqi sales until the Americans believe the crisis in northern Iraq is over.

"In a neutral world, yes, the oil-sale could go ahead without U.S. support," said Shaukat Fareed, a member of the U.N. Steering Committee to implement the oil sale.

"But you must realize that all the deals will go through the (Security Council) sanctions committee and anyone can block the oil deals when they come through," he said. The United States and Britain are members of the sanctions committee.

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[Kurdish]

APW VVV32 Aa ----- Fighting Leaves Kurds and Aid Groups Vu 09-04 6:46p

BC-Iraq-Aid Groups,0497

Fighting Leaves Kurds and Aid Groups Vulnerable

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

DAHUK, Iraq (AP) - Aid groups are pulling out of this northern town for safety reasons, and the Kurdish civilians left behind say they feel more vulnerable than any time since the 1991 upheaval following the Gulf War.

Dahuk, 50 kilometers (30 miles) across the border from Turkey, has been a key center for relief organizations since Kurdish refugees flooded northern Iraq during a failed uprising by Kurdish rebels in the weeks after the Gulf War.

But Western aid groups have been pulling out since President Saddam Hussein's army launched an attack Saturday against one Kurdish faction in Irbil, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) to the southeast.

"We have been surviving with the help of the U.N. and the aid groups," said Nazar Suleyman, a teacher in Dahuk. "Now we will be left with nothing."

"Kids come to class just to pick up U.N. handouts," Suleyman continued as she tended to her 4-month-old son. "My family depended on the handouts too. I don't know what will happen now."

The area became even less secure Tuesday when the U.S.-led Military Coordination Center pulled out of Zakho, a town just on the Iraqi side of the border with Turkey.

"If the MCC leaves, Saddam will strike us again," said Sahwan Bercooli, a young trader in Dahuk, a city of 700,000.

With the United States firing missiles into southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday, there were fears that the MCC, made up of 21 soldiers from the United States, Britain, France and Turkey, could become a target.

The Iraqi army has been allied with a Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which controls the towns in the region, including Zakho and Dahuk.

"We are worried about our security a great deal," said a Kurdish man who works for the U.S. aid group Northwest Medical. "I want to find a way out myself before Saddam comes," said the man, who refused to give his name.

The Americans working for the group left Iraq via Turkey on Tuesday. Three American employees working for the U.S. government relief organization, Agency for Foreign Disaster Assistance, also left Tuesday.

"We are in an uncertain situation," Askem Ali, an Iraqi working with AFDA. "We don't know what to do."

The U.S. government has advised Americans living in Iraq to leave. There were some 40 Americans working for 10 aid organizations, and they accounted for most of the U.S. citizens believed to be in Iraq.

There are some 70 international groups operating in the Kurdish region, most of them from Western countries. Some have decided to stay despite the heightened tensions.

"Of course we are worried about our security," said Graham Kent, deputy director of the British group 4Rs. "But we are a humanitarian organization and we have a job to do here."

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tnx. rgds. myre.

^BC-Iraq-Aid Groups<

^Fighting Leaves Kurds and Aid Groups Vulnerable<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

DOHUK, Iraq (AP) _ Aid groups are pulling out of this northern town for safety reasons, and the Kurdish civilians left behind say they feel more vulnerable than any time since the 1991 upheaval following the Gulf War.

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The U.S. government has advised all Americans living in Iraq to leave, though the their were only a handful to begin with, most of them working for international aid groups.

There are some 70 international groups operating in the Kurdish region, most of them from Western countries. Some have decided to stay despite the heightened tensions.

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(yo-gm)

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-US(

^Turkey No Longer Same 'Staunch Ally' Washington Used to See(

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ In Washington's eyes, Turkey used to be a "staunch ally" that opened its airbases to U.S. jetfighters fighting Iraq in the Gulf War.

Six years later, with an Islamic-inspired prime minister in office, Turkey appears less willing to cooperate with the United States on such missions.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who had criticized the past U.S. offensives on Iraq, remained aloof from the latest U.S. strikes against Baghdad.

U.S. officials ignored Erbakan as well, bypassing him during the exchange of diplomatic notes about the latest developments. They chose to deal with the pro-Western foreign minister, Tansu Ciller, a former head of government whose party is the junior partner in the governing coalition.

Erbakan has made no statements reflecting the government's position and refused to answer questions from journalists.

But Abdullatif Sener, the finance minister and Erbakan's close aide, apparently speaking on Erbakan's behalf, criticized the U.S. offensive.

"The problems of a certain region must be handled by the countries which belong to that region," Sener told reporters Tuesday. "I do not think it is healthy for some countries to see themselves as the single resolver" of problems.

Sener's remarks were softer than what his boss had said in the past.

"We are saying to the Americans: 'Go Home,'" he said in Parliament after Turkey allowed a U.S.-led allied air force to operate out of Incirlik base in southern Turkey. The force was set up to deter attacks on the Kurdish semi-autonomous state in northern Iraq at the end of the Gulf War.

Erbakan's Welfare Party had organized rallies protesting Turkey's pro-allied policy during the Gulf War. U.S. flags were burned at the rallies.

More than 70 fighter jets and bombers from Britain, France and the United States are still based in Incirlik, enforcing a no-fly zone above the 36th parallel.

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Erbakan made his first foreign trip to Iran last month and secured a \$20 billion oil deal with Tehran despite pleas from Washington.

He dispatched two ministers to Iraq where they met with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and two others to Libya.

Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait six years ago, the late Prime Minister Turgut Ozal sided with Washington immediately, closing a joint oil pipeline even before the U.N. Security Council ordered an economic embargo against Baghdad.

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Washington had no requests this time to use Incirlik for airstrikes against Iraq, diplomats said.

Although Mrs. Ciller said she would be on the phone with Clinton Tuesday, she later said she talked with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.

"Mrs. Ciller's presence in the cabinet facilitated the dialogue for Washington with Erbakan's government," said Prof. Gunay Goksu Ozdogan, of Marmara University's international relations department.

Mrs. Ciller said on Wednesday that she had written to Clinton seeking measures to minimize Turkey's financial losses from economic sanctions against Iraq. Turkey's has lost \$27 billion from the closing of the oil pipeline and halting of trade with Iraq.

Turkey was upset by a U.N. decision to postpone the opening of the oil pipeline after Iraq's military strike on Kurdish dominated northern Iraq over the weekend.

(djk.)

AP-LD-09-04-96 1801GMT<

[Kurdish]

APW VVV34 Aa ----- Turkey No Longer Same Staunch Ally Wash 09-05 3:34a

BC-Turkey-Iraq-US,0641

Turkey No Longer Same Staunch Ally Washington Used to See

By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR

Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - In Washington's eyes, Turkey used to be a staunch ally that opened its airbases to U.S. jetfighters fighting Iraq in the Gulf War.

Six years later, with an Islamic-inspired prime minister in office, Turkey appears less willing to cooperate with the United States on such missions.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who had criticized the past U.S. offensives on Iraq, remained aloof about the latest U.S. strikes against Baghdad.

U.S. officials ignored Erbakan as well, bypassing him during the exchange of diplomatic notes about the latest developments. They chose to deal with the pro-Western foreign minister, Tansu Ciller, a former head of government whose party is the junior partner in the governing coalition.

Erbakan has made no statements reflecting the government's position and refused to answer questions from journalists.

But Abdullatif Sener, the finance minister and Erbakan's close aide, criticized the U.S. offensive.

"The problems of a certain region must be handled by the countries which belong to that region," Sener told reporters Tuesday, apparently speaking on Erbakan's behalf. "I do not think it is healthy for some countries to see themselves as the single resolver" of problems.

Sener's remarks were softer than what his boss had said in the past.

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Attn: Mr. DCM

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233 87 intw rom ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Turkey To Establish Buffer Zone in Northern Iraq<

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - The government will establish a buffer zone in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey after the latest turmoil in the region, an official said Thursday.

A high level government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that the military was preparing to set up the zone in mountainous terrain along the 331-kilometer (199-mile) border.

The rebels, who belong to the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, keep bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of their fight for autonomy.

Turkish troops were expected to cross into northern Iraq to attack rebel base before the zone was established.

An intelligence official said there were some 2,500-3,000 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq operating from 12 bases. The official said five of the bases fell inside the proposed security zone.

Heightened military activity was seen in the southeastern region with buses ferrying soldiers to locations along the border.

The security zone would be as deep as 20 kilometers (12 miles) depending on the terrain.

The government has notified its Western allies about the plan to avoid any misunderstanding, the official said, insisting that Turkey has no designs on Iraqi territory.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller also sent a letter to U.S. President Clinton about it Tuesday, the official said.

Mrs. Ciller signaled Turkey's preparations for a military operation in northern Iraq on Wednesday.

Iraqi Kurds have maintained a de-facto state in northern Iraq since the end of the Gulf war under the U.S.-led allied protection force.

President Clinton ordered air strikes against Iraq after Saddam Hussein sent in troops against the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil over the weekend.

The security zone will not disturb Iraqi Kurdish civilian settlements, the official said. He did not disclose how many troops will stay in the zone.

The zone will be defended with heavy artillery and aircraft.

The official refused to say when the plan would be put into effect, but it is expected to be within days.

Turkey's largest offensive was launched last year when Turkey dispatched 35,000 soldiers inside northern Iraq for a five-week operation.

Despite criticism from European countries, Washington supported the operation, saying it was Turkey's right to defend itself.

More than 21,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish fighting since 1984.

(za-sh)

AP-LD-09-05-96 1113GMT<

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^BC-Kurds-Peace Talks<

^Kurdish Faction Reports New Fighting, Opposes Peace Talks<

^EDs: Contains material from story slugged BC-Iraq-Kurds.<

^By ALEX EFTY=

^Associated Press Writer=

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) _ One Kurdish faction reported renewed clashes in northern Iraq on Thursday, while a rival Kurdish group said its temporary alliance with the Iraqi army had ended.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said that Iraqi troops, accompanied by some 150 tanks, were attacking their positions in Bestana, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) southeast of Irbil, the main Kurdish city in northern Iraq.

The report, issued by the PUK's Washington office, could not be independently confirmed. U.S. military officials have said that Iraqi forces remain in the area. Iraq, meanwhile, has said it withdrew all its troops from the northern region after a weekend offensive.

"Heavy fighting continues between the Iraqi forces and Kurdish forces," the PUK said. "It is certain that Saddam's recent gains in Kurdistan have only emboldened his resolve to continue with his attacks on the Kurdish people."

The PUK, which holds most of northeast Iraq, was driven out of Irbil last Saturday by President Saddam Hussein's army and a rival Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The small town of Bestana is just a few kilometers (miles) north of the 36th parallel, placing it in the northern no-fly zone patrolled by U.S.-led forces.

Meanwhile, the KDP claimed it's temporary alliance with the Iraqi army was over.

Safeen Dizayhee, a spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said his group "saw it as a legitimate right to ask for limited help" from the Iraqi army.

But Dizayhee, speaking in Ankara, Turkey, claimed the brief alliance was over.

"It was a limited cooperation and it had no political meaning. It is over now," he said.

However, he said the KDP reserved the right to call on the Iraqi army in the future.

"If we feel the KDP's security is undermined, we will take the necessary measures again," he added.

In a related development, the PUK rejected as meaningless an offer for peace talks by the KDP.

KDP leader Massoud Barzani said Wednesday his side would be ready to attend U.S.-sponsored talks with the PUK in an effort to end the latest fighting.

"Barzani's words don't mean anything any more, he has become part of the Saddam regime," PUK spokesman Barham Salih said from Washington. "If (Barzani) is serious about what he says, he should denounce the Saddam regime."

Meanwhile, the Iraqi National Council, the umbrella association of Iraqi opposition groups, claimed at least 1,500 people, mostly Iraqi Arabs, have been arrested by Iraqi secret police in the Irbil area.

The group said it was "extremely concerned about the lives and safety of these people. The reputation of Saddam's (secret police) for fearsome brutality is well-known," said the statement faxed from the group's London office.

The military action by the Iraqi forces prompted this week's U.S. missile strikes against Iraq. The strikes were aimed at punishing Saddam for violating the Kurdish safe-haven region established in northern Iraq in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War.

The two Kurdish factions have quarreled for decades and have basic policy differences.

Barzani puts limited faith in Western promises to protect the Kurds and seeks a compromise settlement with Saddam that will give the Kurds a degree of autonomy.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani argues that Saddam cannot be trusted and wants to continue a struggle for an independent Kurdish region.

(ae-gm)

AP-LD-09-05-96 1205GMT<

[Greece]

APW VVV33 Aa ----- Nuances Apparent In Criticism of U.S. M 09-04 11:40p

BC-Iraq Reaction, 0844

Nuances Apparent In Criticism of U.S. Missile Strikes

With US-Iraq

By G.G. LABELLE

Associated Press Writer

CAIRO, Egypt - The United States came under strong criticism Wednesday from friends and foes for staging new missile attacks on Iraq, even as President Bill Clinton insisted that the U.S. coalition was holding.

Clinton asserted that Washington's Arabs allies understand the reason for the air strikes against Saddam Hussein. "I don't think it's dead," he said of the U.S. coalition against Saddam.

But at least publicly, Arab responses have ranged from condemnation to measured criticism - and silence from Saudi Arabia.

Britain stalwartly supported Washington's move to destroy Iraqi air defense installations in response to Saddam's troop intervention in the northern Iraq, where Kurdish factions have been fighting.

France declared the U.S. offensive has "nothing to do" with Iraq's aggression in the 1991 Gulf war in which French forces battled alongside the United States to expel Saddam's forces from oil-rich Kuwait.

Russia's denunciation of the U.S. strikes echoed Cold War rhetoric. Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov decried "forces that want to set up a one-sided world that would dictate terms to all others."

In the Middle East, U.S. foes like Libya and Iran were harshly critical of the American show of force. In moderate Jordan, the Chamber Deputies urged Arab states to unite against "American barbarism."

Egypt, which receives \$2.3 billion annually in U.S. aid, refrained from condemning the attacks, but expressed strong concern about the effect of the new missiles strikes on the Iraqi people.

While Saudi leaders made no public statements, government sources have said the monarchy supports Washington's tough stand against Saddam. Still, the Pentagon conceded that the Saudis refused to allow U.S. warplanes based in the kingdom to launch the attacks.

U.S. ships and aircraft fired 44 cruise missiles against military targets in Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Pentagon said.

Clinton said the attacks were meant to end "a broad pattern of violence and recklessness by Saddam against the Kurds, against other ethnic minorities, against Iraq's neighbors."

But the ambiguity of the situation - Iraq was invited into the enclave by one Kurdish militia in its battle with another - has divided the United States from some of its allies.

"What happened in Iraq today had nothing to do with what happened in 1990-1991 when Iraq had annexed its neighbor Kuwait in scandalous conditions," said French government spokesman Alain Lamassoure.

Lamassoure said his country's reaction to the U.S. attacks was like "that of most of the international community" and most "moderate Arab countries."

Primakov, the Russian foreign minister, said his government would veto a proposed U.N. Security Council resolution submitted by Britain that would condemn Iraq's incursion into the Kurdish enclave.

He suggested the British draft was one-sided, saying any resolution "should be universal. It should condemn the use of force and demand an immediate switch to a political solution."

Trade ties, oil sales and territorial concerns are thought to figure in some governments' responses to the U.S. attacks.

-Russia and France have sought to renew business with Iraq and ease its isolation after the Gulf War. Both have supported a U.N. plan allowing Iraq to sell dlr 2 billion in oil every six months to buy food and medicine - a plan in jeopardy after Saddam's Kurdish adventure.

-Iraqi oil sales have been banned under a U.N. Security Council resolution since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The oil-rich states of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia would lose money if Iraq re-entered the oil market and prices dropped.

-Syria and Iran, both of which have Kurdish minorities like Iraq, have criticized the United States partly out of concern that the missile strikes could lead to the break up Iraq and formation of a Kurdish state on their borders.

Many Arabs share the belief that the U.S. attacks will add to the suffering of the Iraqi people while doing nothing to remove Saddam from power.

The Arab response to the U.S. air strikes is also colored by the view that the United States is pro-Israel and anti-Arab.

Wednesday's edition of Egypt's leading government daily, Al-Ahram, notes that America failed to intervene in recent weeks when both Turkey and Iran sent troops into the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq in an attempt to block resistance by their own Kurdish minorities.

Lutfi Wakid, a columnist with the Egyptian opposition Al-Ahli newspaper, on Wednesday called the United States "the biggest bully in modern political life." He said Washington was quick to enforce U.N. resolutions against Iraq but did nothing to pressure Israel to accept resolutions calling for surrender of occupied Arab land in exchange for peace.

[Kurds]

APW VVV33 Aa ----- U.S. Attack Sends Saddam a Message, But 09-04 11:17p

BC-ANALYSIS-Iraq-US-No Solution,0591

U.S. Attack Sends Saddam a Message, But Doesn't Weaken Him
With Iraq-Kurds

An AP News Analysis

By GREG MYRE

Associated Press Writer

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) - Saddam Hussein's army attacked the Kurds in northern Iraq. So why did the United States respond with missiles and an expanded no-fly zone hundreds of kilometers (miles) away in the south?

The Americans made clear they were not trying to clean up the mess in northern Iraq, a region where many armed groups are active and no one has more than partial control.

In choosing a target, the Americans opted for Iraqi air defense systems in the south for at least three apparent reasons:

-Reason No. 1: Quite simply, the Americans consider southern Iraq more important than the north. Iraq's southern neighbors, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, are major oil producers with staunchly pro-American governments that favor tough action against Saddam.

The Americans blasted Iraqi air defense systems in the south and pushed a southern no-fly zone from the 32nd parallel to the 33rd parallel, a line that runs only 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of Baghdad.

As a result, it will be more difficult for Saddam to mobilize his army and send it south to threaten Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, two countries that can't match Iraq's military might.

-Reason No. 2: Northern Iraq is a complete mess, and a U.S. strike there would have been filled with risk.

The two main Iraqi Kurdish factions in the north have been quarreling on and off for decades, and they again came to blows on Aug. 17, ending a fragile cease-fire.

Iraq intervened on behalf of one faction, the Kurdish Democratic Party, alleging that archrival Iran was supporting the other Kurdish group, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. That intervention sparked the U.S. attack.

Northern Iraq is even more volatile thanks to periodic attacks by Turkey, which pursues its own rebellious Kurds when they retreat into the rugged mountains across the border.

Yet no one group has dominance, making the region extremely unstable. When Iraq saw Iran meddling recently, Saddam apparently decided he could not let that pass without responding. But that in turn provoked the Americans.

-Reason No. 3: U.S. relations with Turkey, a key NATO ally that borders northern Iraq, are sensitive at the moment. The new Turkish prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, is an Islamic conservative, and the United States doesn't want to risk pushing him away from the West.

A U.S. attack in northern Iraq could easily ignite a much larger conflagration, thereby sending Kurdish refugees pouring into Turkey, as happened in 1991 after the Gulf War.

Turkey is already a bit touchy about having the U.S.-led forces patrolling the no-fly zone over northern Iraq from bases in southeastern Turkey.

In the U.S. calculations, hitting the north wasn't worth the risk, even if that's where Saddam's army was active.

The Americans declared the mission a success. But the latest U.S. confrontation with Saddam, like previous showdowns, has produced inconclusive results.

When the dust clears from the latest fight, Saddam may have a bit less room to maneuver. But the Kurds will still feel vulnerable, and Saddam will remain in full control of Iraq.

It seems almost inevitable that the cycle will begin again.

EDITOR'S NOTE - Greg Myre is the AP's Middle East news editor, based in Nicosia, Cyprus.

233 87 intw rom ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld<

^Turkey To Establish Buffer Zone in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: INSERTS foreign minister's denial that incursion planned, Iraqi Kurdish spokesman confirming Turkey's plans, PKK reaction.<

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The government will establish a buffer zone in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey after the latest turmoil in the region, an official said Thursday.

A high level government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that the military was preparing to set up the zone in mountainous terrain along the 331-kilometer (199-mile) border.

The rebels, who belong to the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, keep bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of their fight for autonomy.

Safeen Dizayhee, a representative of the Iraqi Kurdish opposition group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which controls part of northern Iraq near the Turkish border, said the Turkish foreign ministry informed him about the plan Wednesday.

"We have been assured that it will not harm the civilian population," Dizayhee said.

Dizayhee said Turkish soldiers would be stationed on Turkish territory "but they will be have the liberty to strike whenever they find it necessary."

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller denied a cross-border operation was planned.

"What is on the agenda is not an operation. What is on the agenda is not to allow such (terrorists) infiltrations," Mrs. Ciller told reporters.

Officials never disclose cross-border operations in advance for security reasons.

PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan issued a statement Thursday calling on the Turkish Kurdish population to retaliate against any move by the Turkish army to invade, according to the pro-PKK news agency DEM.

Turkish troops, 4th graf pvs.

(za)

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233 87 intw rom ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld<

^Turkey To Establish Buffer Zone in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with government saying Turkey stages air attack<

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkish jet fighters staged strikes Thursday on suspected Turkish Kurdish rebel bases in northern Iraq.

A Foreign Ministry official said a "limited" air attack was carried out against the rebels, but gave no other details.

After the latest turmoil in the region, the government was moving to establish a buffer zone in northern Iraq to prevent the rebels from crossing into Turkey.

A high level, 2nd graf

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-US<

^NY Int, attn; Niko Price<

^Turkey No Longer Same Staunch Ally Washington Used to See<

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ In Washington's eyes, Turkey used to be a staunch ally that opened its airbases to U.S. jets fighting Iraq in the Gulf War.

Six years later, with an Islamic-inspired prime minister in office, Turkey appears less willing to cooperate with the United States on such missions and more intent on protecting its own interests, including containing its own Kurdish rebels.

The government declared a security zone in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey after the latest turmoil in the region, a senior foreign ministry official said Thursday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the new "status at the border" has already gone into effect in the mountainous terrain along the 331-kilometer (199-mile) border on Wednesday.

"We will make it practically impossible for the terrorists to come in," he said, referring to the rebels who have been fighting for autonomy since 1984. More than 21,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict.

Turkish jets also staged an air strike Thursday on suspected rebels camps across the border, the official said.

The rebels, who belong to the Kurdistan Workers Party, known by its Kurdish initials PKK, keep bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of their fight for autonomy.

The official said the Turkish troops would launch cross-border raids or remain at certain strategic areas in northern Iraq to enforce the security zone.

The official stressed that Turkey had no designs on Iraqi territory and informed Baghdad about its plans.

While the Turkish government concentrated its efforts on maintaining security at the border, it appeared less willing to cooperate with the United States in its missions against Baghdad.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan has made no statements reflecting the government's position until now.

But Abdullatif Sener, the finance minister and Erbakan's close aide, criticized the U.S. offensive.

"The problems of a certain region must be handled by the countries which belong to that region," Sener said, apparently speaking on Erbakan's behalf. "I do not think it is healthy for some countries to see themselves as the single resolver" of problems.

U.S. officials ignored Erbakan as well, bypassing him during the exchange of diplomatic notes about the latest developments. They chose to deal with the pro-Western foreign minister, Tansu Ciller, a former head of government whose party is the junior partner in the governing coalition.

Although Erbakan has moderated his anti-West rhetoric since he came to power in June, his foreign policy was radical enough to irritate the allies.

Erbakan made his first foreign trip to Iran last month and secured a \$20 billion oil deal with Tehran despite pleas from Washington.

He dispatched two ministers to Iraq where they met with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and two others to Libya.

When Operation Desert Storm started, some U.S. jetfighters joined Turkey's Incirlik airbase, using it as a staging point for strikes in northern Iraq.

More than 70 fighter jets and bombers from Britain, France and the United States are still based in Incirlik, enforcing a no-fly zone above the 36th parallel.

But Washington had no requests this time to use Incirlik for air strikes against Iraq, diplomats said.

It also extended cautious support for Turkey's establishment of a buffer zone.

"We recognize the right of Turkey to defend itself against PKK terrorism," a U.S. Embassy statement said. "We would expect that any such security zone would be temporary."

The depth of the security zone would range from 5 to 20 kilometers (3-12 miles) depending on the terrain. Civilian Iraqi Kurdish settlements will remain in the area.

An intelligence official said there were some 2,500-3,000 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq operating from 12 bases. The official said five of the bases fell inside the proposed security zone.

The zone will be defended with heavy artillery and aircraft.

(za/vls)

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u i BC-Iraq-Kurds-Fighting 4thLd 09-05 0151

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds-Fighting, 4th Ld

^Fighting Rages Between Kurdish Factions<

^Eds: CORRECTS 3rd graf to show that protesters were non-Iraqi Arabs.<

^AP Photos Planned<

^BY YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ Two rival Kurdish factions slugged it out Thursday near this strategic northern city as Iraqi troops and tanks and troops dug in nearby to keep a close watch on the conflict.

Elsewhere, the skies over southern Iraq were calm. U.S. warplane patrolled an expanded no-fly zone following American cruise missile attacks on air defense installations Tuesday and Wednesday.

In the capital Baghdad, hundreds of non-Iraqi Arabs living in the city filled the streets. They burned an effigy of President Clinton, shouted anti-American slogans and pledged support for President Saddam Hussein.

^Thursday's fighting, 4th graf 3rd Ld<

^(wf-mdm)<

AP-LD-09-05-96 1745GMT<

[Kurdish]

APW VVV36 Aa ----- Turkey To Establish Buffer Zone in Nort 09-05 4:17p

BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld

Turkey To Establish Buffer Zone in Northern Iraq

Eds: INSERTS foreign minister's denial that incursion planned,
Iraqi Kurdish spokesman confirming Turkey's plans, PKK reaction.

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Turkish troops, 4th graf pvs.

(za)

051319 Sep GMT

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru, 0963

Kurdish Faction Claims Iraqi Troops Attacking Near Irbil

Eds: UPDATES, EDITS and TRIMS with Thursday developments

AP Photos Available

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - A Kurdish rebel faction said Iraqi troops, backed by some 150 tanks, were attacking Kurdish positions Thursday morning outside the key northern city of Irbil.

The report by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan could not be independently confirmed. U.S. military officials have said Iraqi forces remain in the area. Iraq, meanwhile, has said it withdrew all its troops from the northern region after a weekend offensive.

"Heavy fighting continues between the Iraqi forces and Kurdish forces" in Bestana, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) southeast of Irbil, the main Kurdish city in northern Iraq, said the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The PUK, which holds most of northeast Iraq, was driven out of Irbil last Saturday by President Saddam Hussein's army and a rival Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

"It is certain that Saddam's recent gains in Kurdistan have only emboldened his resolve to continue with his attacks on the Kurdish people," the PUK said in a statement.

The small town of Bestana is just a few kilometers (miles) north of the 36th parallel, placing it in the northern no-fly zone patrolled by U.S.-led forces.

The latest report of clashes came after two days of U.S. missile strikes at air defense systems in southern Iraq, aimed at punishing Baghdad for its incursion into the north.

"The flagrant American aggression on Iraq is a black cloud which will scatter like the previous clouds of spite and perfidy," Iraq's state-run Al-Thawra newspaper said Thursday.

"The United States of America is using its omnipotence and technological power to spread corruption on earth and to commit the meanest kinds of crimes," it added.

On Wednesday night, Iraqi anti-aircraft fire lit up the skies of Baghdad.

Detonations reverberated throughout the capital for 15 minutes and air-raid sirens blared as the anti-aircraft batteries fired.

Washington insisted there had been no American, allied or other military operations in the area Wednesday evening, although an Iraqi military statement accused the United States of attacking Baghdad directly.

It was not clear if the gunners hit, or even had, specific targets.

"The malicious American enemy ... sent his missiles aiming at several military positions and at heavily populated civilian sites," including Baghdad, the Iraqi statement said. Iraq's "sons confronted the missiles with efficiency and capability and downed a high percentage of them."

There was an explosion Wednesday night in the streets of the al-Hurriya residential area near Baghdad's old airport, which left a crater about 6 feet (2 meters) wide and 3 feet (1 meter) deep.

However, the crater was too small to have been caused by a cruise missile. The exact cause of the blast was not immediately clear.

One possibility would be Iraqi anti-aircraft fire returning to the ground. U.N. officials in Baghdad, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Iraqi anti-aircraft fire appeared to include the use of a 20 mm cannon.

Sheik Sabaa Hussein Saleh, a clergyman at a mosque damaged in the blast, said two people were killed and eight injured. Windows at the mosque were shattered.

In the United States, President Clinton, in his first public assessment of the American attacks on Iraq's air-defense system, called the operation a success and said Saddam was now "strategically worse off."

The two U.S. missile strikes were ordered in response to Saddam's weekend assault on Kurdish rebels in the U.S.-declared Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.

Meanwhile, Iraq protested the missile attacks in a letter to the United Nations, Iraqi newspapers reported Thursday.

The U.N. Security Council failed Wednesday to agree on a common response to the crisis.

Britain's deputy U.N. Ambassador Stephen Gomersall said his delegation would revise its draft resolution, the original of which condemned Iraq for its incursion into the north and demanded an immediate withdrawal. It made no mention of the U.S. missile attacks.

Iraq's armed forces also claimed Iraqi defenses shot down several missiles and a pilotless reconnaissance plane. U.S. officials denied the claim.

On Wednesday night, Saddam visited air defense headquarters in Baghdad and met with senior officers, the official Iraqi News Agency reported.

It said the Iraqi leader "gave his valuable instructions on the way of defending and protecting the land and sky of our dear country."

American, British and French pilots took part in U.S. and allied air patrols Wednesday over the newly enlarged southern no-fly zone, said Air Force Gen. Joseph Ralston. The zone now extends within 30 miles (48 kilometers) of southern Baghdad.

Iraq's two no-fly zones were created after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south from Iraq's military. After the enlargement of the southern zone, roughly half of Iraq is now off-limits to Iraqi warplanes.

Despite facing a technologically superior United States, Saddam showed some defiance of the no-fly zone Wednesday when an Iraqi air defense battery beamed its radar at an American warplane - the first step in preparing an attack.

After the F-16 determined the radar was preparing to launch a surface-to-air-missile, the fighter jet retaliated by firing a HARM missile that knocked out the mobile Iraqi station, U.S. officials said.

[Greek]

APW VVV35 Aa ----- Turkey To Establish Buffer Zone in Nort 09-05 2:11p

BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds

Turkey To Establish Buffer Zone in Northern Iraq

By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR

Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - The government will establish a buffer zone in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey after the latest turmoil in the region, an official said Thursday.

A high level government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that the military was preparing to set up the zone in mountainous terrain along the 331-kilometer (199-mile) border.

The rebels, who belong to the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, keep bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of their fight for autonomy.

Turkish troops were expected to cross into northern Iraq to attack rebel base before the zone was established.

An intelligence official said there were some 2,500-3,000 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq operating from 12 bases. The official said five of the bases fell inside the proposed security zone.

Heightened military activity was seen in the southeastern region with buses ferrying soldiers to locations along the border.

The security zone would be as deep as 20 kilometers (12 miles) depending on the terrain.

The government has notified its Western allies about the plan to avoid any misunderstanding, the official said, insisting that Turkey has no designs on Iraqi territory.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller also sent a letter to U.S. President Clinton about it Tuesday, the official said.

Mrs. Ciller signaled Turkey's preparations for a military operation in northern Iraq on Wednesday.

Iraqi Kurds have maintained a de-facto state in northern Iraq since the end of the Gulf war under the U.S.-led allied protection force.

President Clinton ordered air strikes against Iraq after Saddam Hussein sent in troops against the Kurdish-controlled city of Irbil over the weekend.

The security zone will not disturb Iraqi Kurdish civilian settlements, the official said. He did not disclose how many troops will stay in the zone.

The zone will be defended with heavy artillery and aircraft.

The official refused to say when the plan would be put into effect, but it is expected to be within days.

Turkey's largest offensive was launched last year when Turkey dispatched 35,000 soldiers inside northern Iraq for a five-week operation.

Despite criticism from European countries, Washington supported the operation, saying it was Turkey's right to defend itself.

More than 21,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish fighting since 1984.

(za-sh)

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds-Fighting, 1st Ld-Writethru,1061<

^Precede NICOSIA<

^Kurdish Factions Fight Outside Northern Iraqi City

Eds: Leads throughout to UPDATE with rival Kurdish groups fighting south of Irbil; color and quotes from Irbil. CHANGES byline.<

^With Iraq-Kurds<

^BY YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Fighting between rival Kurdish factions raged south of this city Thursday, as Iraqi tanks and troops dug in nearby but apparently were not involved in the battle.

The fighting comes a day after President Clinton pronounced himself satisfied with U.S. attacks this week on Iraqi radar and command centers south of Baghdad. Clinton enlarged a southern no-fly zone to include much of southern Iraq after a weekend of Iraqi fighting in the north.

Thursday, witnesses said the main battle zone appeared to be about 19 miles (30 kms) south of Irbil, around the town of Bestana.

Iraq, which has been supporting the Kurdistan Democratic Party, positioned tanks and other heavy artillery about 6 miles outside the town. The Iraqis appeared to be poised to intervene if needed against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Earlier Thursday, the PUK had said Iraqi tanks and troops were besieging their positions in Bestana, a few miles (kilometers) north of the 36th parallel and just within the northern no-fly zone. The report was issued from the PUK's Washington office.

U.S. military officials said their latest intelligence indicated Iraqi troops withdrawing from Irbil and that there was no major fighting in the region.

Iraq and the KDP combined Saturday to drive the Iranian-backed PUK out of Irbil, the main Kurdish city in northern Iraq.

The offensive in the Kurdish safe haven prompted the United States to launch missile attacks against southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Increasing numbers of KDP fighters were leaving Irbil for the battle site to the south. The guerrillas shouted victory slogans and sang as they left the city in any vehicle they could find.

Sounds of heavy shelling, which could be heard from the outskirts of Irbil, continued to move further south.

Additional details of the fighting were not immediately available and it was impossible to reach or cross the front-lines.

In Irbil, residents recalled the fear they felt when Iraqi troops and their KDP allies overran the city on Saturday.

One man described how Iraqi troops arrested the head of a neighboring family, taking the man away with his hands tied behind his back. His wife and five children fled the city Wednesday.

The man said his neighbor had given the Iraqis a false name, as all Arabs in Irbil do.

``They were always afraid (Iraqi President Saddam Hussein) would one day come and find them,'' he said.

``And he did. I saw, with my own eyes, three Arab men, taken away from our neighborhood.''

KDP guerrillas, armed with heavy machine guns and rocket launchers, surrounded houses in Irbil, searching for concealed weapons.

The streets have been deserted at night, with the KDP encouraging residents to remain in their homes. Residents believe many PUK fighters have hidden their guns and may come out one night to strike back.

There were some signs Thursday that normalcy was returning to Irbil, a city of about 1 million people. Most stores were open; but electricity was still unavailable and some restaurants and shops were using generators.

A U.N. guard protecting international aid workers in Irbil told The Associated Press that clashes southeast of the city were ``pretty substantial.''

``It was not possible to cross through the area,''

said the guard, speaking on condition of anonymity. He said U.N. vehicles had to turn back.

In Washington, CIA Director John Deutch told lawmakers Thursday that the most recent information shows Saddam's soldiers and motorized tank units withdrawing from Irbil and the northern Iraqi frontier.

Deutch told the Senate Intelligence Committee the long-term U.S. goal is to see Saddam's regime replaced by a democratic government. ``The most recent example of Saddam Hussein's aggression just emphasizes the importance of doing so,''

he said.

U.S. aircraft patrolled the skies of southern Iraq without challenge today and a spokesman for Washington's military headquarters in the Persian Gulf region, Air Force Lt. Col. Nino Fabiano, said intelligence information showed no major fighting in northern Iraq.

The KDP, meanwhile, said its temporary alliance with the Iraqi army was over.

Safeen Dizayhee, a spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said his group ``saw it as a legitimate right to ask for limited help'' from the Iraqi army but claimed the alliance had been terminated.

``It was a limited cooperation and it had no political meaning. It is over now,''

he said, speaking from Ankara, Turkey.

However, Dizayhee said the KDP reserved the right to call on the Iraqi army in the future.

In a related development, the PUK rejected as meaningless an offer for peace talks by the KDP.

KDP leader Massoud Barzani said Wednesday his side would be ready to attend U.S.-sponsored talks with the PUK in an effort to end the latest fighting.

``Barzani's words don't mean anything any more. He has become part of the Saddam regime,''

PUK spokesman Barham Salih said from Washington. ``If (Barzani) is serious about what he says, he should denounce the Saddam regime.''

The Iraqi National Council, the umbrella association of Iraqi opposition groups, claimed at least 1,500 people, mostly Iraqi Arabs, have been arrested by Iraqi secret police in the Irbil area.

The group said it was ``extremely concerned about the lives and safety of these people. The reputation of Saddam's (secret police) for fearsome brutality is well-known,''

said the statement faxed from the group's London office.

The military action by the Iraqi forces prompted this

week's U.S. missile strikes against Iraq. The strikes were aimed at punishing Saddam for violating the Kurdish safe-haven region established in northern Iraq in the wake of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

The two Kurdish factions have quarreled for decades and have basic policy differences.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV37 Aa ----- With Iraq-Kurds-Fighting

09-05 9:51p

BC-Turkey-Iraq-US, 1st Ld-Writethru, 0815

With Iraq-Kurds-Fighting

Turkey No Longer Same Staunch Ally Washington Used to See

Eds: UPDATES with government declaring security zone in northern Iraq; comment from prime minister's aide; US comments on security zone. No pickup.

By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR

Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - In Washington's eyes, Turkey used to be a staunch ally that opened its airbases to U.S. jetfighters fighting Iraq in the Gulf War.

Six years later, led by a prime minister from an Islamic party, Turkey appears less willing to cooperate with the United States on such missions and more intent on protecting its own interests, including containing its own Kurdish rebels.

Turkish Justice Minister Sevkettin Kazan on Thursday criticized U.S. airstrikes on Iraqi targets.

"U.S. attacks on Iraq are against international agreements. No country has the right to act in this way without a U.N. Security Council resolution," said Kazan, a close aide of the prime minister.

The government declared a security zone in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey after the latest turmoil in the region, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Omer Akbel told the Associated Press.

"We will take the necessary military measures to prevent terrorist activities in a narrow strip in northern Iraq along the border."

Another official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the new measures had already gone into effect in the mountainous terrain along the 330-kilometer (200-mile) border on Wednesday.

"We will make it practically impossible for the terrorists to come in," he said.

The Kurdish rebels have been fighting for autonomy in southeast Turkey since 1984. More than 21,000 people have died in the fighting.

Turkish jets also staged an air strike Thursday on suspected rebels camps across the border, the official said.

The rebels, who belong to the Kurdistan Workers Party, known by its Kurdish initials PKK, keep bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey.

The official said the Turkish troops would launch cross-border raids or remain at certain strategic areas in northern Iraq to enforce the security zone.

The official stressed that Turkey had no designs on Iraqi territory and informed Baghdad about its plans.

While the Turkish government concentrated its efforts on maintaining security at the border, it appeared less willing to cooperate with the United States in its missions against Baghdad.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan has not commented publicly on the U.S. mission. But Abdullatif Sener, the finance minister and Erbakan's close aide, criticized the U.S. offensive.

"The problems of a certain region must be handled by the countries which belong to that region," Sener said. "I do not think it is healthy for some countries to see themselves as the single resolver" of problems.

U.S. officials ignored Erbakan as well, bypassing him during the exchange of diplomatic notes about the latest developments. They chose to deal with the pro-Western foreign minister, Tansu Ciller, a former head of government whose party is the junior partner in the governing coalition.

Although Erbakan has moderated his anti-West rhetoric since he came to power in June, his foreign policy was radical enough to irritate the allies.

Erbakan made his first foreign trip to Iran last month and secured a dlrs 20 billion oil deal with Tehran despite pleas from Washington.

He dispatched two ministers to Iraq where they met with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and two others to Libya, another U.S. enemy.

When Operation Desert Storm started, some U.S. jetfighters joined it from Turkey's Incirlik airbase, using it as a staging point for strikes in northern Iraq.

More than 70 fighter jets and bombers from Britain, France and the United States are still based in Incirlik, enforcing a no-fly zone above the 36th parallel.

But Washington had no requests this time to use Incirlik for air strikes against Iraq, diplomats said.

It also extended cautious support for Turkey's establishment of a buffer zone.

"We recognize the right of Turkey to defend itself against PKK terrorism," a U.S. Embassy statement said. "We would expect that any such security zone would be temporary."

The depth of the security zone would range from 5 to 20 kilometers (1-12 miles) depending on the terrain. Civilian Iraqi Kurdish settlements will remain in the area.

An intelligence official said there were some 2,500-3,000 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq operating from 12 bases. The official said five of the bases fell inside the proposed security zone.

The zone will be defended with heavy artillery and aircraft.

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^Fighting Rages Between Kurdish Factions<

^Eds: RECASTS to raise reference to Iraqi tanks waiting on road near fighting between Kurdish factions.<

^AP Photos Planned<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ Two rival Kurdish factions slugged it out Thursday near this strategic northern city as Iraqi troops and tanks dug in nearby to keep a close watch on the conflict.

The fighting was centered near the town of Bestana, 19 miles (30 kms) south of Irbil, a major city captured last week by the Kurdistan Democratic Party fighters backed by the Iraqi army.

The KDP fought with their rivals, the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK, as Iraqi tanks waited nearby at a stretch of road between Irbil and the town of Kuysanjak. Few details of the fighting were immediately available.

In Washington, CIA Director John Deutch said reports indicated Saddam's troops and tank units were withdrawing from Irbil and "the northern Iraqi frontier," following retaliatory measures by the United States.

But the PUK claimed that Iraqi troops and tanks were attacking its positions in Bestana.

Meanwhile, the KDP claimed their temporary alliance with the regime of President Saddam Hussein had ended. The PUK said it doubted that.

Skies over Iraq were calm. U.S. warplanes patrolled a no-fly zone over southern Iraq that U.S. President Bill Clinton had expanded Tuesday to further reduce Iraq's offensive capabilities.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the United States had launched cruise missiles against Iraqi air defense installations. The attacks were in retaliation for the Iraqi government's incursions into Kurdish territory in northern Iraq, which is under limited protection of Western powers.

Clinton on Wednesday pronounced himself satisfied with the missile attacks, saying most Iraqi troops had left the Kurds' enclaves in and around Irbil.

U.S. State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said in Washington that while the Iraqis have pulled back most of their mechanized infantry from the Irbil area, they retain an ability to intervene in the region.

Saddam has "reintroduced a massive security presence in the area under cover of these deployments," Davies said. "This gives him a new and, we think, troubling ability to intimidate Kurds and others in the north." He did not elaborate.

In the capital Baghdad, hundreds of non-Iraqi Arabs living in the city filled the streets. They burned an effigy of Clinton, shouted anti-American slogans and pledged support for Saddam.

The flow of KDP fighters to the battlefield in northern Iraq increased sharply on Wednesday and Thursday. Screaming victory slogans and singing marching songs, they traveled south to the battle zone in any vehicle they could find.

A U.N. guard protecting international aid workers in Irbil told The Associated Press that clashes southeast of the city were "pretty substantial."

"It was not possible to cross through the area," said the guard, speaking on condition of anonymity. He said U.N. vehicles had to turn back.

Residents of this battered northern city told of abuses by Iraqi forces during last Saturday's fighting.

Irbil residents interviewed by The Associated Press said Iraqi troops rounded up dozens of anti-Saddam activists after capturing the city.

Neighbors in one poor neighborhood said Iraqi troops took away an Arab man they identified only as Hamza after tying his hands behind his back. His wife and five children fled the city Wednesday fearing their lives.

"Hamza was not his real name - it was a fake one to protect him from Saddam's secret police," a neighbor said.

Many of the remaining Arabs living in the Kurdish-dominated north are dissidents who seek Saddam's overthrow.

The Iraqi National Council, the umbrella association of Iraqi opposition groups, claimed at least 1,500 people, mostly Iraqi Arabs, have been arrested by Iraqi secret police in the Irbil area.

The group said it was "extremely concerned about the lives and safety of these people. The reputation of Saddam's (secret police) for fearsome brutality is well-known," said the statement faxed from the group's London office.

This city of 1 million people tried to resume its normal life five days after the fierce street battle. Most stores were open Thursday. Electricity still was not available, but people set up gasoline-powered generators.

KDP fighters, armed with heavy machine guns and rocket launchers surrounded houses, searching for weapons concealed by PUK guerrillas.

The KDP said its temporary alliance with the Iraqi army was over but that it reserved the right to request assistance from Iraq again, if necessary. KDP leader Massoud Barzani said his side would be ready to attend U.S.-sponsored talks with the PUK in an effort to end the latest fighting.

"Barzani's words don't mean anything any more," replied PUK spokesman Barham Salih from Washington. "He has become part of the Saddam regime."

AP-LD-09-05-96 2145GMT<

[Kurdish]

APW VVV38 Aa ----- US Attack Creates Problems For Building 09-06 2:23a

BC-UN-Iraq Diplomacy, 3rd Ld-Writethru,0438

US Attack Creates Problems For Building Consensus To Condemn Iraq

Eds: US, Britain fail to overcome Russian opposition

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - U.S. and British diplomats failed Thursday to overcome Russian opposition and win Security Council approval for a resolution against Iraq's moves against a Kurdish faction in the north of the country.

After hours of intense negotiations, the 15-member council agreed to try again Friday to forge a common stand against the Iraqi moves, which led to U.S. missile strikes.

It was clear that President Clinton's unilateral actions, including missile attacks and an extension of the "no fly" zones in northern and southern Iraq, were making it difficult to maintain a unified international front against Saddam Hussein.

"No one is supporting what Iraq did," Egyptian Ambassador Nabil Elaraby told reporters. "It is a question of the territorial integrity of Iraq."

He said Egypt opposed any measures which might threaten Iraq's sovereignty and unity. French, Chinese and Russian diplomats voiced the same concerns.

Britain circulated a resolution Tuesday to "condemn" Iraq for the incursion and to demand an immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the protected area. It did not mention the U.S. attacks.

But with broad disagreement among council members, the British recast the proposal, eliminating the word "condemn" and expressing only "grave" concern over the incursion.

The new proposal demands an immediate Iraqi withdrawal from the area. It also requests that the U.N. plan to allow Iraq to resume limited oil sales take effect "as soon as conditions permit."

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright and ambassadors from Britain, France and Russia conferred for nearly two hours before the afternoon council meeting. But she failed to convince the Russians to agree to the watered-down text.

"Our position hasn't changed," Russian Ambassador Sergey Lavrov told reporters. As a permanent council member, Russia could veto any resolution.

On Wednesday, the Russian Mission to the United Nations said the American missile attacks and extension of the "no fly" zone violated international law because they were not approved beforehand by the council.

Lavrov said Russia "insists in the Security Council on the condemnation of any use of force in Iraq, including external intervention, a part of which are the U.S. missile attacks on that country."

052325 Sep GMT

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 0963

Iraqi Troops Keep Close Watch on Kurdish Fighters But Don't Intervene

Eds: Recaps previous.

AP Photos ANK101-102

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Iraqi troops kept close watch as two rival Kurdish factions battled outside the largest Kurdish city in northern Iraq.

Saddam Hussein's troops apparently stayed out of the fighting Thursday, a few miles south of Irbil, following two days of American attacks on Iraqi radar and command sites.

But a new problem for the region arose when Turkey said it will send troops into northern Iraq to prevent Kurdish rebels fleeing the fighting from crossing its border.

Elsewhere, the skies over southern Iraq were calm. U.S. warplanes patrolled a newly expanded no-fly zone following the American cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air defense installations Tuesday and Wednesday.

The attacks were in retaliation for the army's incursions into Kurdish territory in northern Iraq, which is under limited protection of Western powers.

In Paris, Secretary of State Warren Christopher won some support from France to help patrol the two no-fly zones the allies imposed following the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

The French will resume patrols Monday in the north and broaden their patrols in the south, though they will not cover as wide an area as patrols by the United States and Britain. France had objected to this week's U.S. missile strikes.

Late Thursday, the ruling Revolution Command Council chaired by Saddam said Iraq would fight enforcement of the no-fly zones. If allied warplanes continue their "violation" of Iraqi airspace, "we will continue resisting it according to the legitimate right of self-defense and in defense of national sovereignty," the council said.

In the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, hundreds of Arabs burned an effigy of President Clinton, shouted anti-American slogans and pledged support for Saddam.

The Baghdad protest and Kurdish fighting in the north came a day after Clinton pronounced himself satisfied with U.S. attacks on Iraqi radar and command centers south of Baghdad. Clinton also asserted most Iraqi troops had left the Kurds' enclaves in and around Irbil.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said that while the Iraqis have pulled back most of their mechanized infantry from the Irbil area, they retain an ability to intervene in the region.

Saddam has "reintroduced a massive security presence in the area under cover of these deployments," Davies said. "This gives him a new and, we think, troubling ability to intimidate Kurds and others in the north." He did not elaborate.

Thursday's fighting was centered near Bestana, just south of Irbil, a major city captured last week by the Kurdistan Democratic Party with Iraqi backing. The flow of KDP fighters streaming to the battlefield increased sharply Wednesday and Thursday.

The KDP "peshmergas" - "those who face death" in Kurdish - screamed victory slogans and sang marching songs, traveling south in any vehicle they could find to do battle with their Iran-backed rivals, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

A U.N. guard protecting international aid workers in Irbil told The Associated Press that clashes southeast of the city were "pretty substantial."

"It was not possible to cross through the area," said the guard, speaking on condition of anonymity. He said U.N. vehicles had to turn back.

Iraqi tanks, however, were seen by journalists along the road between Irbil and the town of Kuysanjak mid-afternoon Thursday, waiting without intervening while the two Kurdish groups battled nearby. Saddam's tanks and heavy artillery appeared settled in around the Koshtapa district 12 miles (19 kilometers) south of Irbil.

Earlier, the PUK had claimed that Iraqi troops backed by about 150 tanks were attacking its positions in Bestana.

In Washington, CIA Director John Deutch said intelligence reports indicated Saddam's troops and tank units were withdrawing from the area.

"We are seeing the withdrawal of the mechanized and armored units from the Kurdish territories in northern Iraq back to their garrisons fairly systematically. We find that most of the units are returning and there is compliance with the change in the no-fly zone," Deutch said.

Residents of this battered northern city told of abuses by Iraqi forces during the initial fighting Saturday.

Irbil residents interviewed by The Associated Press said Iraqi troops rounded up dozens of anti-Saddam activists after capturing the city.

Neighbors in one poor neighborhood said Iraqi troops took away one Arab man they identified as Hamza after tying his hands behind his back. His wife and five children fled the city Wednesday fearing for their lives.

"Hamza was not his real name - it was a fake one to protect him from Saddam's secret police," said a neighbor, who also declined to give his name.

Many of the remaining Arabs living in the Kurdish-dominated north are dissidents who seek Saddam's overthrow.

This city of 1 million people tried to resume its normal life five days after the battles broke out. Most stores - closed a few days ago - were open Thursday.

The KDP said its temporary alliance with the Iraqi army was over, but that it reserved the right to request assistance from Iraq again, if necessary. KDP leader Massoud Barzani said his side is ready to attend U.S.-sponsored talks with the PUK.

"Barzani's words don't mean anything any more," replied PUK spokesman Barham Salih from Washington. "He has become part of the Saddam regime."

[Athens]

APW VVV40 Aa ----- Saddam Defiant But Not Aggressive On Fi 09-06 2:44p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru,0789

Saddam Defiant But Not Aggressive On Fighting, Fly Zones

Eds: UPDATES with no fighting reported Friday, U.N. official saying northern Iraq remains tense. Edits to conform and trim.

AP Photos IRB101-104

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - More defiant in words than in actions, Iraq stayed out of fighting in Kurdish areas and has avoided challenging U.S. planes patrolling "no fly" zones within its borders.

For the first time since Saturday, no fighting was reported anywhere in Iraq Friday.

However, the situation remained volatile. The United States and its allies plan to continue their flights over the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq, and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has vowed to target the aircraft.

On Thursday, Saddam's troops stood by but didn't intervene as rival Kurdish factions fought outside Irbil, the largest Kurdish city in northern Iraq. In Irbil, U.N. official Paul Dahl said Friday that fighting had stopped.

"But who knows what will happen in an hour's time," he said. "The area is still very tense."

Saddam's restraint Thursday followed two days of American attacks on Iraqi radar and command sites.

Still, Iraq's leadership remained defiant, with the ruling Revolution Command Council chaired by Saddam saying late Thursday it would fight allied warplanes' "violation" of Iraqi airspace. "We will continue resisting it according to the legitimate right of self-defense and in defense of national sovereignty," the council said.

Iraq denounced the attacks as a "war crime" and urged the United Nations to condemn the bombings.

And in the Iraqi capital Thursday, hundreds of Arabs living in Baghdad burned President Clinton in effigy, shouted anti-American slogans and pledged support for Saddam.

Clinton ordered the cruise missile attacks Tuesday and Wednesday in response to a weekend offensive by Iraq on the protected Kurdish area in its north. He also ordered an expansion of the no fly zone in southern Iraq. The allies imposed two zones after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south.

The divided U.N. Security Council was to try again Friday to forge a common stand against Iraq's incursion into Kurdistan. Chinese, Russian, French and Egyptian diplomats have opposed measures that may threaten Iraq's sovereignty.

U.S. intelligence reports Thursday indicated Saddam's troops and tanks were withdrawing from northern Iraq.

"We are seeing the withdrawal of the mechanized and armored units from the Kurdish territories in northern Iraq back to their garrisons fairly systematically. We find that most of the units are returning and there is compliance with the change in the no-fly zone," said CIA Director John Deutch.

Iraq's Kurdish factions have opposed Baghdad for decades. Since the safe haven was established they mostly have quarreled with each other.

On Thursday, their fighting centered near Bestana, just south of Irbil. The flow of Kurdistan Democratic Party fighters into the battlefield increased sharply Wednesday and Thursday.

The "peshmergas" - "those who face death" in Kurdish - screamed victory slogans and sang marching songs, traveling south in any vehicle they could find to do battle with their Iran-backed rivals, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

A U.N. guard protecting international aid workers in Irbil told The Associated Press that Thursday's clashes were substantial.

"It was not possible to cross through the area," said the guard, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Iraqi tanks, however, were seen by journalists along the road between Irbil and the town of Kuysanjak mid-afternoon Thursday, waiting without intervening while the two Kurdish groups battled nearby. Saddam's tanks and heavy artillery appeared settled about 15 kilometers (10 miles) south of Irbil.

Irbil residents interviewed by The Associated Press said Iraqi troops rounded up dozens of anti-Saddam activists after capturing the city Saturday. The city of 1 million people tried to resume a normal life five days after the battles broke out. Most stores had reopened.

But a new regional problem has arisen, with Turkey saying it will send troops into northern Iraq to prevent Kurdish rebels fleeing the fighting from crossing its border.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Sahhaf summoned the top Turkish diplomat in Baghdad to a midnight meeting Thursday to protest Turkey's military preparations as "unjustified conduct," the Iraqi News Agency reported.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld<

^Northern Iraq Tense But Calm; Iraqi Tanks Dig In<

^Eds: UPDATES with PUK saying there was fighting Thursday elsewhere in northern Iraq, additional details.<

^AP Photos Available<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ After a day of clashes, two rival Kurdish factions held their fire Friday outside this northern city. But the region remained tense and Iraqi tanks were entrenched nearby, a U.N. official said.

For the first time since last Saturday, no fighting was reported anywhere in Iraq. However, conditions remained volatile. The United States and its allies plan to keep up their monitoring over the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq, while Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has vowed to fire on the aircraft.

U.N. official Paul Dahl, stationed in Irbil, said Friday that fighting had stopped between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the two groups that battled Thursday in Bestana, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) southeast of Irbil.

"But who knows what will happen in an hour's time," he said at midday Friday. "The area is still very tense."

He said Iraqi troops and tanks were well entrenched about 15 kilometers (10 miles) southeast of Irbil, though they have not taken part in the most recent skirmishes.

"They seem to be digging in and it does not look as though they are about to leave," Dahl said after visiting the area. "They are not hiding at all, anyone can see them."

The Iraqi troops, who have been supporting the KDP, appeared to be just north of the 36th parallel, the northern no-fly zone designated by the United States and its allies, according to witnesses, including an APTV crew.

While Iraq has withdrawn its troops from Irbil, the city they captured Saturday, members of the secret police remain, residents say. Dozens of people have been rounded up, according to civilians in Irbil.

In another development, the PUK said there was fighting Thursday between the two Kurdish factions near Halabja, in northeast Iraq, near the border with Iran.

PUK spokesman Barham Salih in Washington said the KDP was trying to cutoff the road leading into Halabja, a PUK stronghold. He said he had no reports of fighting anywhere in northern Iraq on Friday.

Halabja gained notoriety in 1988 when Saddam's forces used poison gas on the town, killing more than 4,000 Kurdish men, women and children.

Meanwhile, a new complication arose when Turkey said it would send troops into northern Iraq to prevent its own Kurdish rebels from crossing into southeast Turkey.

Iraqi Foreign, 9th graf of 2nd Ld-Writethru

(gm)

AP-LD-09-06-96 1335GMT<

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u i BC-Turkey-Iraq 09-06 0173

ank 233 87 intw

^BC-Turkey-Iraq<

^Prime Minister Erbakan Listens to an Anti-US Sermon<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, whose anti-Western rhetoric colored his political career, on Friday attended noon prayers at his party's mosque and heard the United States be condemned for the air strikes against Iraq.

"America and its allies violate the rights of other nations in display of force," Muhittin Yildirim, the mosque's imam, said in a sermon.

Yildirim preached that "all faithful must use all their means to stand against it (the United States)."

Sermons are given before noon prayers on Fridays, the Muslim holiday.

Erbakan, who moderated his anti-West rhetoric since his Islamic-inspired Welfare party came to power this year, has remained silent about the latest U.S. air strikes against Baghdad.

In another development, a radical Islamic group held an anti-U.S. demonstration in Istanbul. About 500 protesters shouted slogans against Washington and burned a U.S. flag.

(za-fd)

AP-LD-09-06-96 1733GMT<

[kurdish]

APW VVV42 Aa ----- Prime Minister Erbakan Listens to an An 09-06 8:30p

BC-Turkey-Iraq

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(za-fd)

061733 Sep GMT

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 4th Ld-Writethru,0713<

^Precede IRBIL<

^Iraqis Dig In; Kurdish Factions in Tense Standoff<

^EDs: NEW throughout with details of Iraqi positions in northern Iraq, changes byline.<

^AP Photos BAG101-102<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUSH TAPA, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi tanks and troops fortified their positions Friday on the sun-parched plains of northern Iraq while two Kurdish factions were locked in a tense standoff near here.

At least 100 Iraqi tanks, some surrounded by high bunkers and barbed wire, were scattered over a wide area about 24 kilometers (15 miles) south of Irbil, the city Iraqi forces captured last week while supporting one Kurdish faction against another.

The Iraqi position _ anti-aircraft batteries, artillery, machine gun nests and mortars surrounded by sandbags _ were just north of the 36th parallel, the southern edge of the U.N. "no-fly zone" created to protect Iraqi Kurds from Baghdad's attacks.

Friday was the first day in almost a week that no major clashes were reported in Iraq, but the scene in the north remained highly combustible.

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said Friday that the United States saw positive developments in northern Iraq now that Iraq had pulled forces south, but it was too soon to say the crisis was resolved.

The Iraqi military has joined with the Kurdistan Democratic Part against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which its foes say is backed by Iran.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani told The Associated Press that the Iraqis remained an imminent threat.

"The Iraqis are not returning to the old lines, as some circles say in the United States," he said in a telephone interview. "On the contrary, the Iraqi troops are advancing to the north of that line."

The two Kurdish factions battled Thursday in Bestana, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) southeast of Irbil, with the Iraqi forces keeping a close watch, but not intervening.

The rival Kurdish groups refrained from fighting Friday, but there were no signs that anyone was retreating.

"Who knows what will happen in an hour's time," said U.N. official Paul Dafl, based in Irbil. "The area is still very tense."

The Iraqis and the KDP teamed up last Saturday to drive the PUK from Irbil, the main city in the northern "safe haven" zone for the Kurds. That action prompted the United States to launch missile strikes against southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The alliance between the KDP and Iraq was on full display along the road leading south from Irbil. Road blocks were manned by both Iraqi soldiers and Kurds, wearing the traditional olive-green baggy outfit with a cotton scarf used as a belt.

Bulldozers and earthmovers, driven by Kurds, dug trenches and piled up dirt barriers. Iraqi flags and the yellow banners of the Democratic Party flew side-by-side above tents.

Iraqi trucks carried soldiers along the road, east from Kush Tap towards the area held by the KDP.

Some gunfire was heard along the front, but the fighting appeared to have subsided since the PUK was pushed out Thursday from Kush Tapa, a small crossroads surrounded by farms and cattle fields.

Children walked hand-in-hand behind Iraqi troops. An Iraqi personnel carrier stopped to let ducks cross the two-lane road.

Iraqi soldiers would not talk about plans or whether they expected to withdraw. But a KDP official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, described the Iraqi positions as being "reinforced."

In Irbil, the Iraqi troops have withdrawn, but residents said that some of Saddam's secret police and informants have remained.

Slowly, the joy among KDP-backers at tipping the scales against their rivals has given way to anxiety about having made an alliance with Saddam.

In Dahuk, near the Turkish border, money-changer Ali Hassan kept three things under the lid of his desk: brick-sized stacks of Iraqi dinars, a Koran and an old, creased picture of Saddam.

"They are the three forces that make the world go round," he said. "Money, God and the devil."

"We tried to be men of God, but instead we are playing with the devil," he said.

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^EC-Iraq-Kurds-Iran

^Little-Noticed Iranian Offensive Helped Spur Saddam's Attack<

^With EC-Iraq-Kurds<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

DIANA, Iraq (AP) _ Refugees on Friday described how they fled their homes when Iranian forces attacked their mountain villages last month _ an event cited by Saddam Hussein to justify his recent attack on Kurdish-dominated northern Iraq.

Iraq said it stepped in to support one Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, only after Iranian forces crossed the border to support the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in bloody internecine fighting.

The Iraqi offensive in support of the KDP garnered wide international attention and drew Washington's fury when Iraqi forces captured the key northern city of Irbil.

But Iran's apparent military intervention in support of the rival PUK has attracted little notice, in part because it appears to have been concentrated in the rugged extreme north, not far from where the borders of Iran, Iraq and Turkey meet.

Atop the Zozik mountains here, 125 miles (200 kms) northeast of Irbil, the thuds of intermittent shelling could be heard Friday, part of a low-intensity battle between the two Kurdish factions behind the next row of mountains.

KDP officials claimed Iranian artillery was firing some of the rounds, although there was no independent confirmation of that.

Iran has criticized Iraq for the recent turmoil in the Kurdish areas, but has not said whether its forces were involved in any of the fighting.

One young refugee, Hamet Hidir Ibrahim, said Iranian artillery started shelling his home village of Kasra on Aug. 16, coinciding with the outbreak of hostilities between the two Kurdish groups.

"They shelled us for three days, then they attacked," he told The Associated Press. "There were at least 200 Iranian troops along with (PUK) guerrillas. At least 100 people were killed."

Ibrahim and other refugees from Kasra, one of three villages near the Iranian border captured by Jalal Talabani's PUK last month, insisted Iranian troops participated in the offensive.

"I saw it with my own eyes. They were Iranian troops, not Talabani guerrillas," said Fatima Abdullah Mostafa, 45, a mother of eight.

"They were speaking Farsi, not Kurdish, and wore uniforms I'd never seen before," Mrs. Mostafa said as two of her children clung to her shirt and another was cradled in her right arm.

Some 200 refugees from Kasra are squeezed into a school building used as a makeshift refugee camp here.

Folded-up mattresses and blankets are piled on top of students' desks classrooms. In one room, the teacher's desk has been converted into a kitchen, covered with pots, pans, flour and "tanik" _ the traditional Kurdish bread, round and thin.

"We left everything behind," Mrs. Mostafa said. "Even the clothes I'm wearing are not mine. Good people here gave me those."

All of Mrs. Mostafa's children made it here with her, but her husband and two of her cousins were captured by the Iranians, she said.

Barefoot children ran around the yard of the school-turned-camp, splashing in little streams of waste water. Women baked layers of tanik on a fire fueled by small pieces of wood.

Diana, a town of 15,000 some 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border, has also come under Iranian bombardment, residents said.

At one point two weeks ago, the Iranians advanced just enough to bring Diana into their shelling range for a day, residents said.

Iran, like Iraq, has long played Kurdish factions against each other. In the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution, Tehran crushed a separatist revolt by its own Kurds in northwestern Iran.

^(yo-mdm-gm)

AP-LD-09-06-96 1543GMT<

ank 233 87 intw nic

^BC-Turkey-Kurds<

^Turkish Army Expected to launch Cross-Border Raid<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - With Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller stressing Turkey's determination to protect its borders, the official Turkish news agency Anatolia reported Friday that forays into northern Iraq to crack down on Turkish Kurdish rebels were imminent.

"At this stage, our priority is (to maintain) our security, border security," Mrs. Ciller told reporters. "Turkey has to take measures at its border and in the adjacent" area.

Turkish Kurdish groups, which belong to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), keep bases in northern Iraq for hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey.

Officials refused to confirm on the record that preparations were under way to go into northern Iraq after PKK rebels.

But a senior foreign ministry official said that Turkish troops will launch cross-border raids or remain at certain strategic areas in northern Iraq to enforce the security zone in the mountainous terrain along the 330-kilometer (200-mile) border.

Turkey on Wednesday declared a security zone as deep as 20 kilometers (12 miles) in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey.

The decision came after an Iraqi Kurdish group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), joined forces with Baghdad against a rival Iraqi Kurdish group which also wants to control northern Iraq.

Baghdad's dispatching of Iraqi troops into the zone to help the KDP triggered U.S. strikes against Iraq this week.

After Baghdad's involvement in northern Iraqi fighting, Turkish troops in the southeastern region bordering Iraq stepped up activity. Buses were seen ferrying soldiers to the border, while digging equipment and personal armored carriers headed towards the border.

The KDP controls parts of northern Iraq adjacent to the Turkish border. But Turkish authorities said the fighting among Iraqi Kurds left the border areas vulnerable to Turkish Kurdish rebel activities against Turkey.

A limited air strike against PKK targets took place Thursday.

A PKK statement claimed that a new Turkish air strike hit its bases in northern Iraq Friday.

An intelligence official said there were some 2,500-3,000 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq operating from 12 bases.

In action inside Turkey, Turkish troops killed 26 guerrillas in five separate incidents in the southeast, the regional governor announced on Friday.

More than 21,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish fighting since 1984.

(za-fd)

AP-LD-09-06-96 1410GMT<

Attention: Mr. McKee
5 pages

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BC-Turkey-Iraq<

^Prime Minister Erbakan Listens to an Anti-US Sermon<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) ÷ Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, whose anti-Western rhetoric colored his political career, on Friday attended noon prayers at his party's mosque and heard the United States be condemned for the air strikes against Iraq.

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Sermons are given before noon prayers on Fridays, the Muslim holy day.

Erbakan, who moderated his anti-West rhetoric since his Islamic-inspired Welfare party came to power this year, has remained silent about the latest U.S. air strikes against Baghdad.

In another development, a radical Islamic group held an anti-U.S. demonstration in Istanbul. About 500 protesters shouted slogans against Washington and burned a U.S. flag.

(za-fd)

vvv 174 09-06 17:33 ui BC-Turkey-Iraq Prime
Minister Erbak

[Kurdish]

APW VVV44 Aa ----- Iranian Paper Attacks Turkish Plan For 09-07 11:45a

EC-Iran-Turkey,0271

Iranian Paper Attacks Turkish Plan For Security Zones
With Iraq-Kurds

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) - A pro-government newspaper on Saturday attacked a Turkish plan for security zones in northern Iraq to guard against cross-border raids by Kurds.

"Turkey's plan is a clear violation of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and appears to be prompted by the Iraqi government's weakness," said the Tehran Times, an English language daily.

"It is necessary that, as a gesture of good neighborliness and in order to reduce tension in the region, Ankara immediately abort the plan," the newspaper said.

Turkish foreign ministry officials said the buffer zone would extend as much as 20 kilometers (12 miles) into Iraq to block guerrilla attacks by the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

The PKK has bases in northern Iraq and stages hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of a 12-year fight for autonomy.

Washington has said it has no objection to the Turkish plan, which also has been endorsed by the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

Turkey's move follows the capture of Irbil in northern Iraq on Aug. 31 by KDP forces and Iraqi army troops from the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Washington launched two missile attacks on Iraq last week for sending troops into Irbil, which is inside a "safe haven" designed to protect Iraq's 3.5 million Kurds from Saddam Hussein's forces.

The enclave was declared by the U.S.-led Western allies after Iraq attacked rebellious Kurds following its defeat in the 1991 Gulf War.

Att: Mr. McKee

070847 Sep GMT

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^BC-US-Turkey<

^US, Turkey Plan Wide-Ranging Talks<

^By GEORGE GEDDA=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) - The United States and Turkey will open discussions next week about the damage the Turkish economy has suffered as a result of international economic sanctions against neighboring Iraq.

State Department spokesman Glyn Davies offered no hint that the United States is prepared to assist Turkey. He said the discussions also will focus on Turkey's attempts to deal with separatist rebels and on the U.S.-led effort to help protect Iraqi Kurds, using Turkish military facilities.

The talks are being held at the suggestion of Turkish Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, who sent letters this week to President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Ciller, a former prime minister, is in a party which is a pro-Western junior partner in the government of Islamic Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who has done little himself to cultivate longstanding good U.S.-Turkish relations.

Preliminary discussions will be held early next week in Ankara with U.S. Ambassador Mark Grossman, Davies said.

Ciller told the BBC she believes the West should compensate Turkey for losses since the Gulf War.

She drew a parallel to the U.S.-led international effort to aid Mexico after the devaluation of the Mexican peso in 1994.

"Billions of dollars were given to Mexico. All we want is financial compensation for some of our losses," Ciller was quoted as saying.

U.S. officials said the bailout of Mexico two years ago did not involve grants but loans, much of which Mexico has already repaid.

Ciller said Turkey's losses since the Gulf War were \$27 billion. Davies left open the question of whether the United States has a plan to assist the Turkish economy.

"We want to hear what the Turks have to say," Davies said.

The two sides also will review Operation Provide Comfort, under which the United States and other countries, using Turkish military assets, protect Iraqi Kurds and provide them with humanitarian assistance.

Davies said that if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein retains a presence in the Kurdish areas, it could have an impact on Provide Comfort. The Iraqi incursion into the Kurdish territories, he said, already has led to the withdrawal of officials who were in that area on behalf of Provide Comfort.

Another subject on the agenda, Davies added, will be a Turkish proposal to establish a buffer zone inside northern Iraq to combat Kurdish rebels who use that area to stage attacks inside Turkey.

[Kurdish]

APW VVV44 Aa ----- Turkey to Allies: Protect Turkomans in 09-07 4:50p

BC-Turkey-Iraq-Turkoman

Turkey to Allies: Protect Turkomans in Northern Iraq

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey on Saturday called on its Western allies to give Turkomans in the region the same kind of protection the alliance now provides Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller relayed Turkey's position to the U.S. Ambassador Marc Grossman here.

Mrs. Ciller said that Turkomans, who are members of seminomadic tribes, lost lives and property in the latest turmoil in northern Iraq after an Iraqi Kurdish group made an alliance with Baghdad to beat a rival group. She didn't cite any figures.

Some 250,000 Turkomans of Turkish origin live in northern Iraq north of the 36th parallel where the U.S.-led allied air force maintains security since the end of the Gulf War. The mission, known as Provide Comfort, operates from a southern Turkish base.

The great majority of a total of 2.5 million Iraqi Turkomans lives south of the 36th parallel, mostly in the cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

Mrs. Ciller did not make it clear if Turkey wanted Washington to enlarge the no-fly zone over northern Iraq to cover Turkoman-populated Iraqi cities.

The "framework of the Provide Comfort has to be reshaped," Mrs. Ciller said.

Hasan Ozmen, a representative of the Iraqi National Turkoman party here, said they expected the no-fly zone to be extended.

"We relayed our expectations to the Turkish government," Ozmen told The Associated Press.

He claimed that the Iraqi troops detained some 300 Turkomans after they struck Irbil in alliance with the Iraqi Kurdish group. He added that a few hundred Turkomans fled Irbil and took refuge in Zakho near the Turkish border.

U.S. State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said on Friday that the United States and Turkey will open discussions next week to review Operation Provide Comfort.

Davies said that if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein retains a presence in the Kurdish areas, it could have an impact on Provide Comfort. The mission's military coordination center withdrew from northern Iraq into Turkey following the latest developments on Tuesday.

Turkey also remains concerned that the latest fighting among Iraqi Kurds left the border areas vulnerable to Turkish Kurdish rebel activities against Turkey.

Turkey on Wednesday declared a security zone as deep as 20 kilometers (12 miles) in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey.

Turkish military activity at the border also signaled that preparations were underway to launch a cross-border raid in northern Iraq to crack down on the Turkish Kurdish rebels' camps.

Some Turkish newspapers reported Saturday that the army already sent scouting units into northern Iraq to pinpoint rebel Kurds.

Turkish Kurdish rebels have been fighting for autonomy and using bases in northern Iraq for hit-and-run attacks against Turkish targets.

More than 21,000 people have died in the fighting since 1984.

(sh-za-fd)

Attention: Mr. Richard McKee

071238 Sep GMT

[Syrian]

APW VVV44 Aa ----- Christopher Gives Ankara Green Light on 09-07 4:48p

BC-US-Turkey ,0351

Christopher Gives Ankara Green Light on Security Zone in Iraq
With Iraq-Kurds

By BARRY SCHWEID

AP Diplomatic Writer

LONDON (AP) - U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher gave Turkey the green light Saturday to send troops into northern Iraq to create a buffer zone meant to keep Kurdish guerrillas from attacking Turkish territory.

"We understand their reason for doing so," Christopher said.

He stressed that the zone along the 200-mile (322 kilometer) border should be very thin and temporary. Ankara has said that it plans to enforce a security zone as wide as 12 miles (20 kilometers) along the mountainous border.

Earlier this week, Turkey conducted an air attack on members of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which has fought for 12 years to carve an independent state out of parts of southeastern Turkey. The United States considers the PKK a terrorist organization.

"The Turks have genuine reasons to be concerned about their border and the PKK," Christopher said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller sent U.S. President Bill Clinton a letter this week notifying him of plans for the security zone, which would be defended with heavy artillery and aircraft. Turkish officials have not said how many troops they will send into Iraq.

Even while attacking Iraq with cruise missiles, the Clinton administration has said it supports Iraq's territorial integrity. Some critics of the U.S. assault have warned that it may destabilize Iraq and the Gulf region.

The Iraqis teamed up with an Iraqi Kurdish group on Aug. 31 to drive a rival Kurdish faction from from Irbil, the main city in the northern "safe haven" for Kurds. The Iraqi incursion prompted the United States to launch missile strikes against southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Christopher praised Turkey on Saturday for supporting the United States in keeping the skies over northern Iraq free of Iraqi warplanes.

He flew to London from Germany to meet Sunday with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

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^BC-Iraq<

^Turkomans Flee Saddam Terror in Irbil<

^By YALMAN ONARAN<

^Associated Press Writer<

ZAKHO, Iraq (AP) _ When Saddam Hussein's troops intervened in the feud between two Kurdish factions, another ethnic minority fled his oppressive rule.

Saddam sent his tanks to Irbil a week ago. Two days later, his secret police started rounding up Turkomans, members of the semi-nomadic tribe said Saturday.

"They took 53 Turkomans away _ at least those are the ones we know," said Mehmet Kemal, who fled Irbil Tuesday.

Kemal then read out the names of the people he said were captured by Saddam's men. "And two of them, leaders of the Iraqi National Turkoman Party, were executed," he said.

The party is banned by Baghdad as part of Saddam's policy to subdue ethnic groups that might revolt against him.

Kemal said he did not know what happened to the rest of the 53 Turkomans on his list, but he said the two were among 96 people executed in Irbil after Iraqi forces stormed into the city Aug. 31.

The mass executions have been reported by many Irbil residents and by Iraqi opposition groups, but no witnesses have been found.

Irbil, the largest city in the Kurdish enclave of northern Iraq, was quiet on Saturday. Guerrillas from the Saddam-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) patrolled the city in pick-up trucks mounted with anti-aircraft guns.

The KDP teamed up with Saddam, its erstwhile enemy, to push the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) out of Irbil, capital of a de facto Kurdish state. The KDP now controls PUK installations in Irbil, including the television station.

Saddam's onslaught against the Kurdish enclave drew the wrath of the United States, which launched missiles at southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The "safe haven" in northern Iraq was declared by the United States and Western allies after Saddam crushed a Kurdish rebellion following his defeat in the 1991 Gulf War. The Kurds, long agitating for autonomy or independence, had been emboldened when a U.S.-led coalition ended Saddam's invasion and occupation of Kuwait on Iraq's southern border.

Baghdad says its troops have left Irbil, but their tanks and artillery can be seen just 24 kilometers (15 miles) south of the city. The Turkoman refugees and others say Iraqi secret police remain in the city.

By Saturday, about 300 Turkoman refugees had reached the small town of Zakho near the Turkish border, 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Irbil.

"Sunday night, Saddam's secret police came to our house, asking for my husband," said Kadriye Mehmetemin. "The next morning we fled Irbil.

"We had fled Kirkuk three months ago fearing Saddam. Then he came to Irbil. Now, he will come here, we know," she said as her two children watched.

Like the other refugees, she has found shelter with Turkomans in Zakho. Her family is staying in a three-room house that shelters 53 other people. Mattresses are jammed into the small rooms and overflow into the kitchen, the terrace and the garden.

Mrs. Mehmetemin said Iraq's secret police arrested her husband twice in one month while they were in Kirkuk. When he was released the second time, they fled.

At least 100,000 Turkomans have fled Baghdad's iron fist in the last two years, seeking safe haven in the Kurdish enclave.

The Kurds, sympathetic to another minority's plight, accepted them. The Iraqi National Turkoman Party was well-established in Irbil with a five-story headquarters and a local television broadcast.

Kurds comprise about 19 percent of Iraq's 18 million people, while Turkomans account for about 14 percent.

Turkey asked its Western allies Saturday to give the Turkomans the same kind of protection they have tried to give the Kurds in the northern Iraq. The majority of Iraq's Turkomans live south of the "safe haven."

However, Turkomans who reached Zakho were not optimistic that Turkey would open its borders to a potential flood of refugees.

On Friday, 80 Turkoman refugees tried to cross the border to seek asylum but were sent back by Turkish border patrols, according to Aydin Kemal, a 30-year-old student.

"There is no safety here," said Songul Fadil Ahmet, a 31-year-old computer technician. "We heard Saddam is coming here. He will kill us. Tell Turkey to save us," she cried.

^(yo/bm/emf)<

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233 87 intw ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Turkoman, 1st Ld-Writethru<

^Turkey to Allies: Protect Turkomans in Northern Iraq<

^EDS: ADDS villagers fleeing for fear of Turkish incursion; quote
from Turkish Kurdish guerrilla<

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Turkish military activity at the border also signaled that
preparations were underway to launch a cross-border raid in northern
Iraq to crack down on the Turkish Kurdish rebels' camps.

Some Turkish newspapers reported Saturday that the army already
sent scouting units into northern Iraq to pinpoint rebel Kurds.

Iraqi Kurdish villagers were seen fleeing from Banke village
further inside northern Iraq in fear of a Turkish incursion.

A Turkish Kurdish guerilla commander, who gave his code name as
Dozwan, said his forces were ready for the Turkish army.

"We really desire them to come so we can give them a big
blow," Dozwan said at his camp, two kilometers (1.2 miles) south of
the Turkish border, just outside Banke. "We will not fight fixed
positions but on the move," he told Associated Press Television.

Turkish Kurdish rebels have been fighting for autonomy and using
bases in northern Iraq for hit-and-run attacks against Turkish
targets.

More than 21,000 people have died in the fighting since 1984.

(sh-za-fd)

AP-LD-09-07-96 1547GMT<

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Turkoman, 2nd Ld<

^Turkey to Allies: Protect Turkomans in Northern Iraq<

^EDS: UPDATES with Ciller saying some Iraqi Kurdish villages might be evacuated<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey on Saturday called on its Western allies to give Turkomans in the region the same kind of protection the alliance now provides Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller relayed Turkey's position to the U.S. ambassador, Marc Grossman, in Ankara.

Mrs. Ciller also said a security zone set up inside northern Iraq along the joint border to prevent Turkish Kurdish rebel infiltrations into Turkey might require the evacuation of some Iraqi Kurdish settlements.

"Some settlements in this buffer zone might be partially evacuated, but a full evacuation is not under consideration," she told reporters.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Iraqi Kurdish group which controls the parts of northern Iraq along the Turkish border, said it received assurances from Turkey that there would be no damage to the civilians with the establishment of the security zone.

Mrs. Ciller, 3rd graf

(za-fd)

AP-LD-09-07-96 1623GMT<

[Kurdish]

APW VVV44 Aa ----- Decades of Feuding Undermine Iraqi Kurd 09-07 1:36p

BC-FEATURE-Iraq-Kurdish Feud,0691

Decades of Feuding Undermine Iraqi Kurds' Struggle for Statehood

AP Photo NY91

By ALEX EFTY

Associated Press Writer

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) - As leaders of northern Iraq's two main Kurdish factions, Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani are bitter foes in an often bloody feud.

It wasn't always so.

When Barzani was a boy, he fondly referred to Talabani as "mam Jalal," or uncle Jalal. They weren't related by blood, but by a common cause - independence for Iraqi Kurds.

At the time, Talabani was a top lieutenant of Barzani's father, Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who founded the Kurdish Democratic Party. But Talabani broke away in the 1960s to form his own party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and the two groups have been rivals ever since.

For decades, the parties have alternated between periods of cooperation in battling the Iraqi government and bouts of infighting that have undermined Kurdish efforts to secure their own state.

In the latest round of communal conflict, the KDP is allied with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, while the PUK is believed to be working with neighboring Iran.

There is little reason to think the current alliances will last any longer than many previous ones. At various times, the two Iraqi Kurd groups have made deals with Iraq, Iran, the West and one another, only to see the links break apart.

The fundamental difference between the two Kurdish factions is whether to struggle for full independence or to seek a compromise with Saddam that might give them limited autonomy and end conflict with the more powerful Iraqi army.

The Kurds feel they have been repeatedly betrayed and abandoned by the West, dating back to shortly after World War I, when President Wilson of the United States promised them a state that never materialized.

As a result, Barzani and his KDP have little faith in the West and are willing to seek a compromise with Saddam. The Iraqi army intervened in fighting in Irbil last week to help Barzani, but the KDP said it was only a temporary military alliance, not a political union.

Talabani says Saddam cannot be trusted. He argues the Kurds should unite and join forces with other Iraqi dissidents in a bid to oust the Iraqi leader.

Another key difference is social. Talabani's supporters are mostly urban and more modern, while Barzani's followers are primarily from the countryside and often cling to semifeudal ways.

The United States has tried to mediate between the two groups since Washington and its allies declared northern Iraq a "safe haven" for Kurds in 1991. The zone was established to halt Iraqi attacks after Saddam's army crushed a Kurdish rebellion following his defeat in the Gulf War.

The Americans have refrained from taking sides, but became embroiled last week when they fired cruise missiles at military targets in southern Iraq to punish Saddam for sending his army into the Kurdish safe haven.

An estimated 20 million Kurds, an non-Arab Muslim people, live in the wild mountain region where the borders of Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan converge. Though their history goes back 2,000 years, they remain one of the world's major national groups without a state of their own.

The elder Barzani used to recall that his clan was involved in fighting for independence from the Ottoman Empire in the early 1900s.

Toward the end of World War II, the elder Barzani scored his greatest triumph when he helped establish a homeland in northwestern Iran, with the tacit support of the Soviet Union. But at the end of the war, the Western allies backed the Shah of Iran in a bloody campaign that wiped out the state.

Barzani launched a new rebellion in northern Iraq in the 1960s, backed by Iran with tacit U.S. support. But this rebellion collapsed in 1975 when Iran and Iraq settled their differences.

The Iraqi Kurds revived their struggle during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, supported by Iran. But Saddam crushed the Kurds, killing thousands with poison gas.

[Cyprus]

APW VVV45 Aa ----- Turkey to Allies: Protect Turkomans in 09-07 6:46p

BC-Turkey-Iraq-Turkoman, 1st Ld-Writethru

Turkey to Allies: Protect Turkomans in Northern Iraq

EDS: ADDS villagers fleeing for fear of Turkish incursion; quote from Turkish Kurdish guerrilla

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey on Saturday called on its Western allies to give Turkomans in the region the same kind of protection the alliance now provides Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller relayed Turkey's position to the U.S. Ambassador Marc Grossman here.

Mrs. Ciller said that Turkomans, who are members of seminomadic tribes, lost lives and property in the latest turmoil in northern Iraq after an Iraqi Kurdish group made an alliance with Baghdad to beat a rival group. She didn't cite any figures.

Some 250,000 Turkomans of Turkish origin live in northern Iraq north of the 36th parallel where the U.S.-led allied air force maintains security since the end of the Gulf War. The mission, known as Provide Comfort, operates from a southern Turkish base.

The great majority of a total of 2.5 million Iraqi Turkomans lives south of the 36th parallel, mostly in the cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

Mrs. Ciller did not make it clear if Turkey wanted Washington to enlarge the no-fly zone over northern Iraq to cover Turkoman-populated Iraqi cities.

The "framework of the Provide Comfort has to be reshaped," Mrs. Ciller said.

Hasan Ozmen, a representative of the Iraqi National Turkoman party here, said they expected the no-fly zone to be extended.

"We relayed our expectations to the Turkish government," Ozmen told The Associated Press.

He claimed that the Iraqi troops detained some 300 Turkomans after they struck Irbil in alliance with the Iraqi Kurdish group. He added that a few hundred Turkomans fled Irbil and took refuge in Zakho near the Turkish border.

U.S. State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said on Friday that the United States and Turkey will open discussions next week to review Operation Provide Comfort.

Davies said that if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein retains a presence in the Kurdish areas, it could have an impact on Provide Comfort. The mission's military coordination center withdrew from northern Iraq into Turkey following the latest developments on Tuesday.

Turkey also remains concerned that the latest fighting among Iraqi Kurds left the border areas vulnerable to Turkish Kurdish rebel activities against Turkey.

Turkey on Wednesday declared a security zone as deep as 20 kilometers (12 miles) in northern Iraq to block Turkish Kurdish rebels from entering Turkey.

Turkish military activity at the border also signaled that preparations were underway to launch a cross-border raid in northern Iraq to crack down on the Turkish Kurdish rebels' camps.

Some Turkish newspapers reported Saturday that the army already sent scouting units into northern Iraq to pinpoint rebel Kurds.

Iraqi Kurdish villagers were seen fleeing from Banke village further inside northern Iraq in fear of a Turkish incursion.

A Turkish Kurdish guerilla commander, who gave his code name as Dozwan, said his forces were ready for the Turkish army.

"We really desire them to come so we can give them a big blow," Dozwan said at his camp, two kilometers (1.2 miles) south of the Turkish border, just outside Banke. "We will not fight fixed positions but on the move," he told Associated Press Television.

Turkish Kurdish rebels have been fighting for autonomy and using bases in northern Iraq for hit-and-run attacks against Turkish targets.

More than 21,000 people have died in the fighting since 1984.
(sh-za-fd)

BC-Iraq,0778

Turkmen Flee Saddam Terror in Irbil

Eds: Stands as 1st-Ld Writethru to some points.

By YALMAN OMARAN

Associated Press Writer

ZAKHO, Iraq (AP) - Hundreds of Turkmen refugees crowded into this small town near the Turkish border Saturday, the latest ethnic minority to flee the wrath of Saddam Hussein.

The Turkmen, members of a seminomadic tribe, had sought shelter in Irbil with Kurds who opposed Saddam's government. But their refuge there turned into a trap when Saddam's troops attacked the city Aug. 31, seeking to replace one Kurdish faction with another.

Two days after the tanks went in, Saddam's secret police started rounding up Turkmen, tribe members said Saturday.

"They took 53 Turkmen away - at least those are the ones we know," said Mehmet Kemal, who fled Irbil Tuesday.

He said two of those people, leaders of the Iraqi National Turkmen Party, were executed.

The party is banned by Baghdad as part of Saddam's policy to subdue ethnic groups that might revolt against him.

Kemal said he did not know what happened to the rest of the 53 Turkmen, but he said the two were among 96 people executed in Irbil after Iraqi forces stormed into the city.

The mass executions have been reported by many Irbil residents and by Iraqi opposition groups, though no witnesses to the killings have been found.

Irbil, the largest city in the Kurdish enclave of northern Iraq, was quiet on Saturday. Guerrillas from the Saddam-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) patrolled the city in pick-up trucks mounted with anti-aircraft guns.

The KDP teamed up with Saddam, its erstwhile enemy, to push the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) out of Irbil, capital of a de facto Kurdish state. The KDP now controls PUK installations in Irbil, including the television station.

Saddam's onslaught against the Kurdish enclave drew the wrath of the United States, which launched missiles at southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

A "safe haven" in northern Iraq was declared by the United States and Western allies after Saddam crushed a Kurdish rebellion following his defeat in the 1991 Gulf War. The Kurds, who had long agitated for autonomy or independence, had been emboldened when a U.S.-led coalition ended Saddam's invasion and occupation of Kuwait on Iraq's southern border.

Baghdad says its troops have left Irbil, but their tanks and artillery can be seen just 24 kilometers (15 miles) south of the city. The Turkmen refugees and others say Iraqi secret police remain in the city.

By Saturday, about 300 Turkmen refugees had reached the small town of Zakho near the Turkish border, 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Irbil.

"Sunday night, Saddam's secret police came to our house, asking for my husband," said Kadriye Mehmetemin. "The next morning we fled Irbil.

"We had fled Kirkuk three months ago fearing Saddam. Then he came to Irbil. Now, he will come here, we know," she said as her two children watched.

Like the other refugees, she has found shelter with Turkmen in Zakho. Her family is staying in a three-room house that shelters 53 other people. Mattresses are jammed into the small rooms and overflow into the kitchen, the terrace and the garden.

Mrs. Mehmetemin said Iraq's secret police arrested her husband twice in one month while they were in Kirkuk. When he was released the second time, they fled.

At least 100,000 Turkmen have fled Baghdad's rule in the last two years, seeking safe haven in the Kurdish enclave.

The Kurds, sympathetic to another minority's plight, accepted them. The Iraqi National Turkmen Party was well-established in Irbil with a five-story headquarters and a local television broadcast.

Kurds comprise about 19 percent of Iraq's 18 million people, while Turkmen account for about 14 percent.

Turkey asked its Western allies Saturday to give the Turkmen the same kind of protection they have tried to give the Kurds in the northern Iraq. The majority of Iraq's Turkmen live south of the "safe haven."

However, Turkmen who reached Zakho were not optimistic that Turkey would open its borders to a potential flood of refugees.

On Friday, 80 Turkmen refugees tried to cross the border to seek asylum but were sent back by Turkish border patrols, according to Aydin Kemal, a 30-year-old student.

"There is no safety here," said Songul Fadil Ahmet, a 31-year-old computer technician. "We heard Saddam is coming here. He will kill us. Tell Turkey to save us," she cried.

[Turkey]

APW VVV45 Aa ----- EU Condemns Iraqi Use of Force; Urge Tu 09-07 9:09p

BC-EU-Iraq, 1st Ld-Writethru

EU Condemns Iraqi Use of Force; Urge Turkey To Stay out; Remain Mum on US Strikes

Eds: UPDATES with details and comments after session; TRIMS previous

With AP Photos

By ROBERT J. WIELAARD

Associated Press Writer

TRALEE, Ireland (AP) - The European Union condemned Iraq for using force against Kurds in north Iraqi safe areas and, in yet another policy difference with Washington, warned Turkey not to invade the area.

Earlier Saturday, the U.S. administration said it supports Ankara's plan to enter northern Iraq to retaliate against Kurdish rebels who have been staging hit-and-run attacks against Turkey.

But at a meeting near this West Irish resort town, the 15 EU foreign ministers urged Turkey to respect Iraq's "territorial integrity," said French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette.

While other delegates echoed that, British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said London recognized the need for Turkey to send troops into northern Iraq "where there is no proper government (and the situation) is very turbulent."

Britain has been Washington's staunchest supporter through the latest standoff with Baghdad. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in London Saturday he understands "the Turks have genuine reasons to be concerned about their border."

Turkey conducted an air attack last week against Iraq-based rebels, members of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, who have fought for 12 years to carve an independent state out of parts of southeastern Turkey.

The EU nations condemned Iraq for using force against Kurds in northern Iraq and demanded a withdrawal of Iraqi troops from the area.

But they had no comment on this week's retaliatory U.S. missile strikes that only Britain has wholeheartedly endorsed.

The ministers debated Iraq at the opening of a two-day informal session that came a day after the U.N. Security Council dropped consideration of a British resolution to condemn Iraq for its incursion into a Kurdish-protected zone.

It failed to win support in part because of opposition to the U.S. missile attacks and extension of "no fly" zones over Iraq. Russia had threatened to veto the resolution.

The Iraqis and the Kurdistan Democratic Party teamed up last Saturday to drive the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan from Irbil, the main city in the northern "safe haven" zone for the Kurds. That action prompted the United States to launch missile strikes against southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

While Britain backs America's hard-line strategy toward Iraq, France has refused a U.S. request to help patrol wider no-fly zones over Iraq than those established by the U.N. Security Council after the 1991 Gulf War.

De Charette said the issue of widening the no-fly zones was not discussed here.

The EU wants the United Nations to proceed with a plan to allow Iraq to resume limited oil sales "as soon as conditions on the ground permit this," said Irish Foreign Minister and meeting chairman Dick Spring.

The U.N. plan would allow Iraq to buy food supplies but was put on hold following the Iraqi offensive last weekend.

Before coming here, Rifkind said the West Europeans should either back the United States on Iraq or come up with another plan.

"If people wish to criticize the U.S.'s action, then they have to provide an alternative strategy," he said on BBC radio before coming here.

"It's no use saying what the Americans did will not resolve the problem. The fact is the Americans have taken tough action."

The divisions within the EU over Iraq underscore the difficulties the 15 member governments face in turning their ideal of a single foreign policy into reality.

(rw)

[Kurdish]

APW VVV45 Aa ----- Iraqi-Backed Kurds Give UN Assurances T 09-07 10:01p

EC-UN-Iraq Oil,0436

Iraqi-Backed Kurds Give UN Assurances They Won't Obstruct
Oil-For-Food

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - Saddam Hussein's Kurdish allies have told the United Nations they will not interfere with the distribution of humanitarian goods under the plan to resume limited Iraqi oil sales, a senior U.N. official says.

Concern over lack of cooperation by the Kurdish Democratic Party, which was put into power in the city of Irbil by Saddam's troops, has been cited by U.S. and British officials as one of the reasons that could delay the oil sales deal.

Under the plan, Iraq could sell dlr 2 billion worth of oil over six months to buy food and medicine. The United Nations would distribute food and medicine purchased with oil revenues in Kurdish areas of the north.

Iraq would distribute the supplies elsewhere under U.N. supervision.

"The new (pro-Iraqi) authorities have gone to the U.N. and assured the U.N. of their full cooperation," Shaukat Fareed, a director of the U.N.'s Department of Humanitarian Affairs, said Friday.

U.N. officials were about to implement the oil sales plan when Saddam's troops invaded the protected Kurdish area to help their allies dislodge the rival, pro-Iranian Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

President Clinton said Tuesday the plan was on hold. U.S. and British officials say the situation in the Kurdish areas has thrown the timetable into doubt.

"Clearly the events of a week ago make it very difficult for him to go ahead at this moment," British deputy Ambassador Stephen Gomersall said.

But other countries including Russia, France, Italy and Germany are anxious for oil sales to begin quickly.

Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole opposes the oil sales plan as a reward to a dictator. Despite U.S. denials, diplomats from several European countries fear the United States may block the sales to exert pressure on Saddam.

In arguing for a delay, U.S. officials note that Irbil was to be the main distribution hub for delivering supplies in the north.

But Fareed said the United Nations could easily relocate the distribution center to Sulimaniyeh, which is controlled by the PUK.

Fareed said a bigger problem was assuring the safety of oil monitors, who would oversee the flow of oil through the pipeline from northern Iraq to Turkey.

"The monitors for the oil will be located in remote places where the pipelines are located," he said. "One has to be assured of their safety."

BC-Iraq, 1st Ld, 0478

Turkmen Flee Saddam Terror in Irbil

Eds: UPDATES with Iraq's denial that it detained Turkmen and ADDS that Turkmen party is part of opposition coalition. UPDATES with demonstration in Baghdad. Pickup 12th graf previous, 'A "safe haven" ...'

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

ZAKHO, Iraq (AP) - Hundreds of Turkmen refugees crowded into this small town near the Turkish border Saturday, the latest ethnic minority to flee the wrath of Saddam Hussein.

The Turkmen, members of a seminomadic tribe, had sought shelter in Irbil with Kurds who opposed Saddam's government. But their refuge there turned into a trap when Saddam's troops attacked the city Aug. 31, seeking to replace one Kurdish faction with another.

Two days after the tanks went in, Saddam's secret police started rounding up Turkmen, tribe members said Saturday.

The Iraqi government denied Saturday night that its forces had detained Turkmen in Irbil. "These are rumors prepared by circles with evil political aims," the Information Ministry said.

But Mehmet Kemal, who fled Irbil Tuesday, said: "They took 53 Turkmen away - at least those are the ones we know."

He said two of those people, leaders of the Iraqi National Turkmen Party, were executed.

The party is banned by Baghdad as part of Saddam's policy to subdue ethnic groups that might revolt against him. It is one of 24 groups that belong to a loose opposition coalition called the Iraqi National Congress.

Kemal said he did not know what happened to the rest of the 53 Turkmen, but he said the two were among 96 people executed in Irbil after Iraqi forces stormed into the city.

The mass executions have been reported by many Irbil residents and by Iraqi opposition groups, though no witnesses to the killings have been found.

Irbil, the largest city in the Kurdish enclave of northern Iraq, was quiet on Saturday. Guerrillas from the Saddam-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) patrolled the city in pick-up trucks mounted with anti-aircraft guns.

The KDP teamed up with Saddam, its erstwhile enemy, to push the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) out of Irbil, capital of a de facto Kurdish state. The KDP now controls PUK installations in Irbil, including the television station.

Saddam's onslaught against the Kurdish enclave drew the wrath of the United States, which launched missiles at southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

In Baghdad, meanwhile, about 1,500 women gathered Saturday to condemn the United States for its missile attacks.

"Irbil is part of Iraq. Its security is the duty of the Iraqi government, not anybody else's," federation chairwoman Manal al-Alosi told the gathering.

Pickup 12th graf previous, 'A "safe haven" ...'

[Greek]

APW VVV46 Aa ----- Turkmen Flee Irbil in Wake of Iraqi Ass 09-08 3:20a

BC-Iraq,0740

Turkmen Flee Irbil in Wake of Iraqi Assault

Eds: Recaps previous.

AP Photo ANK103

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

ZAKHO, Iraq (AP) - Turkmen refugees who fled to this town on the Iraq-Turkey border to escape an Iraqi offensive say that Saddam Hussein's soldiers arrested dozens of their people, killing at least two.

Thousands of Turkmen, a semi-nomadic tribe, live among Kurds in northern Iraq under the U.S.-protected "no-fly" zone.

Saddam sent tanks into the area a week ago to oust an Iranian-backed Kurdish faction from Irbil, about 185 miles (300 kilometers) south of Zakho. Soon after, Iraqi secret police started rounding up Turkmen, the refugees said.

The Iraqi government denied Saturday that its forces had detained Turkmen in Irbil. "These are rumors prepared by circles with evil political aims," the Information Ministry said.

But Mehmet Kemal, who fled Irbil on Tuesday, said: "They took 53 Turkmen away - at least those are the ones we know."

Kemal said two of them, leaders of the Iraqi National Turkmen Party, were executed. The party is banned as part of Saddam's effort to subdue potential rebellion.

Hasan Ozmen, a representative of the Iraqi National Turkmen party in Ankara, Turkey, told The Associated Press that about 300 Turkmen were detained after Iraqi troops stormed Irbil.

Kemal said the two party leaders were among 96 people executed in Irbil after Iraqi forces stormed the city.

Mass executions have been reported by many Irbil residents and by Iraqi opposition groups, but no witnesses have been found.

Irbil, the largest city in the Kurdish enclave of northern Iraq, was quiet Saturday. Guerrillas from the Iraq-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, patrolled the city in pick-up trucks mounted with anti-aircraft guns.

The KDP teamed up with Saddam to push the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan out of Irbil. The KDP now controls PUK installations in Irbil, including the television station.

Saddam's incursion into the enclave prompted the United States to retaliate with missile strikes against air defense targets in southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The United States and Western allies established the "safe haven" to protect Kurds after they made a failed uprising against Saddam following his defeat in the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Turkmen make up 14 percent of Iraq's 18 million people, while the Kurds account for 19 percent. At least 100,000 Turkmen moved to the protected enclave in the last two years to escape Iraqi oppression.

Saddam does not tolerate dissent of any kind. He may have targeted the Turkmen because the Iraqi National Turkmen Party belongs to the Iraqi opposition umbrella group, the Iraqi National Congress.

Iraqi tanks and artillery were positioned 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Irbil on Saturday. The Turkmen refugees and others say Iraqi secret police remain in the city itself.

Kadriye Mehmetemin said Saddam's secret police went to her house Sunday night in an unsuccessful search for her husband. The next morning, the whole family fled Irbil.

Previously, the secret police had twice arrested her husband in the town of Kirkuk. When he was released the second time, they fled.

"We had fled Kirkuk three months ago fearing Saddam. Then he came to Irbil. Now, he will come here, we know," she said as her two children watched.

Mrs. Mehmetemin is among 53 people being sheltered at a three-room house. Mattresses were jammed into the small rooms and overflowed into the kitchen, the terrace and the garden.

By Saturday, about 300 Turkmen refugees had reached Zakho.

Turkey asked its Western allies Saturday to give the Turkmen the same kind of protection they have tried to give the Kurds.

Most of the Turkmen live outside of the safe haven, but it was not clear if Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller was asking the United States to extend the no-fly zone to cover Turkmen-populated cities.

On Friday, 80 Turkmen refugees tried to cross into Turkey to seek asylum, but were sent back by Turkish border patrols, said Aydin Kemal, a 30-year-old student.

"There is no safety here," said Songul Fadil Ahmet, a 31-year-old computer technician. "We heard Saddam is coming here. He will kill us. Tell Turkey to save us."

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru, 0596

Precede NICOSIA

URGENT

Kurdish Group Claim Fresh Onslaught By Iraqis And Rival Kurds
Eds: UPDATES with U.N. officers confirming new Iraqi movements,
reports of new fighting.

With BC-Iraq

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - A Kurdish rebel group said it was under fierce attack by Saddam Hussein's forces and a rival Kurdish faction Sunday. It asked for urgent U.S. intervention.

United Nations officers in Irbil, at least 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the reported battle, confirmed a new Iraqi infantry drive was underway. One U.N. officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said fighting was preventing the U.N. forces from going to the scene.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, whose guerrillas were ousted from Irbil a week ago by Iraqi troops and rival Kurds, said fierce fighting erupted at 8 a.m. (0400 GMT) Sunday.

A PUK statement and the U.N. officers' comments placed the action in a triangle between Irbil on the west, Dokan Lake on the east and the Little Zab River.

This area, along with the city of Sulaymaniya southeast of the embattled triangle, form the last main strongholds for the PUK in Iraq.

Until Aug. 31, the PUK controlled Irbil, the largest Kurdish city in northern Iraq. Saddam's army punched into the city with the PUK's rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party. The KDP has now supplanted the PUK in Irbil, the largest city in what was supposed to be a "safe haven" that protected the Kurds from Saddam's wrath.

"We call on the U.S. and its coalition partners to intervene urgently to halt the Iraqi aggression and end this onslaught against the Kurdish people," the PUK said in a fax sent to The Associated Press in Nicosia, Cyprus, from its office in a Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C.

The United States launched cruise missiles at Iraq last Tuesday and Wednesday after Saddam defied the Western allies' decree that northern Iraq was a "safe haven" for Kurds.

Nearly half of Iraq, comprising wide swaths of "no-fly" zones in both northern and southern Iraq, are also off-limits to Saddam's aircraft. These measures were taken after a U.S.-led military coalition drove Saddam's occupation forces out of Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War.

The KDP is headed by Massoud Barzani, once an ally of PUK leader Jalal Talabani in the campaign for Kurdish independence.

The PUK statement said that at 8 a.m. (0400 GMT) Sunday, Iraqi and KDP forces, "supported by tanks and heavy artillery, attacked Kurdish positions at the junction of Degala, southeast of Irbil. Fierce fighting is reported in the area."

The PUK said Iraqi and KDP forces were trying to break through their lines to capture Kuysanjaq, which it said has a population of 80,000. Kuysanjaq is about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southeast of Irbil.

The U.N. officer said Iraqi infantry were pushing southeast on a different axis toward Taqtaq, 70 kilometers (45 miles) southeast of Irbil, near the Little Zab River.

He said a force made up mainly of KDP fighters, but aided by some Iraqi government troops, have pushed the PUK out of Degala, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) east of Irbil.

The fall of Degala and Taqtaq would put the Iraqi-backed KDP in a stronger position to take control of Kuysanjaq and the Dokan Dam, which provides water and electricity to Irbil. Irbil has been without power and running water, and the KDP has accused the PUK of cutting the sources at Dokan.

[Syrian]

APW VVV48 Aa ----- Turkey To Furnish Border With Electronic 09-08 5:49p

BC-Turkey-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru

Turkey To Furnish Border With Electronic System

EDS: RECASTS with Ciller saying border will be monitored with electronic system; ADDS Ciller phone conversation with Christopher By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR

Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Sunday that Turkey will install an electronic surveillance system along its border with Iraq to combat infiltrations by Turkish Kurdish rebels.

Kurdish guerrillas, fighting for autonomy in southeast Turkey, stage hit-and-run attacks from bases in northern Iraq.

Turkey is concerned that the latest fighting among Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq leaves its border particularly vulnerable to attacks by the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, as the Turkish Kurdish rebels call themselves.

Turkey last week declared a security zone as deep as 20 kilometers (12 miles) into northern Iraq. Mrs. Ciller did not elaborate about the electronic security system project except to say it would help monitor the mountainous rough terrain.

But the daily Milliyet said Turkey would use a Turkish satellite and install heat-sensitive cameras along the 330 kilometer (200 mile) long border.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Saturday spoke supportively of Turkey's security concerns.

"The Turks have genuine reasons to be concerned about their border and the PKK," Christopher told reporters in London. But he stressed that the security zone should be narrow and temporary.

Mrs. Ciller denied media reports that the Turkish army planned to invade the security zone in northern Iraq.

"The essential thing is to launch an operation to take the necessary measures to prevent terrorist passage," she told reporters.

The PKK, which also remains active in eastern provinces, ambushed army patrols Saturday in two separate attacks, killing nine soldiers in the region, the Anatolia agency reported.

Mrs. Ciller said she spoke with Christopher on Sunday to argue that the United States should compensate Turkey for financial losses.

Turkey estimates its losses at dlr 27 billion from the closure of a joint oil pipeline and the halting of trade with Iraq because of U.N. trade sanctions against Baghdad after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The oil pipeline was scheduled to be reopened this month but the United Nations postponed that after Baghdad's latest offensive in northern Iraq.

(fd)

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^BC-Iraq-Gains and Losses

^NY INT: here is iraq overview sty that noblet requested for weekend use. rgds. myre.

^Iraq Gains in the North, Suffers Limited Punishment<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ A young Iraqi soldier digging a trench put down his shovel and looked over his shoulder to make sure no one was watching. He quickly jabbed his fingers in a V-for-victory sign and went back to work.

The sweaty conscript summed up President Saddam Hussein's latest muscle-flexing in northern Iraq: enough gains to claim triumph but enough punishment to muzzle the celebration.

In the past week, Saddam's forces captured the key northern city of Irbil in the Kurdish "safe haven" zone,

handed it over to an allied Kurdish faction and weathered a U.S. missile strike without suffering any major losses.

"It was nearly perfect for Saddam," Faisal Hammidi, a retired Baghdad University professor in Irbil, said of the Iraqi military action.

"It was big enough for Saddam to show the world he's still around, but local enough so the world didn't come crashing down on him like before," Hammidi said.

The offensive prompted the United States to fire 44 cruise missiles at air defense targets in southern Iraq and led to an expansion of the no-fly zone in the region.

The Americans proclaimed the mission a success and warned of further strikes if Saddam again unleashed his army. U.S. officials noted that Iraq withdrew its army from Irbil following the U.S. attack.

However, Saddam could legitimately claim victories of his own.

Once again, he has managed to exploit divisions among the 3.5 million Kurds who make up most of the population in northern Iraq.

His army aligned with one faction, the Kurdish Democratic Party, to take control of Irbil, the main Kurdish city in the north, from a rival faction, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

It now appears Saddam has more influence in northern Iraq than at any time since 1991, when the safe haven was established by the Americans and their allies shortly after the Gulf War.

While the Americans showed that they will punish Saddam for his military adventures, his losses appear relatively minor.

Iraq's air force and its air defense systems have not been effective since the Gulf War. Even before the American strike last week, they were not expected to play a decisive factor in any major conflict.

Saddam depends largely on several divisions of Republican Guard troops, his best-trained and best-equipped fighters, and they were untouched by the American strikes.

Also, the Americans received only mixed international support for their military actions in Iraq, revealing the difficulty of maintaining a united, hard-line position against Saddam.

While Iraq's military pulled out of Irbil, the secret police remained behind and the tanks and artillery moved only a few miles (kilometers) to the south, putting them in position to strike again on short notice.

Ordinary Iraqis, meanwhile, may feel further pinched by the latest conflict.

The currency, the dinar, has fluctuated wildly in the past week. It went from around 1,000 to the U.S. dollar before the fighting, then sank to 2,000 during the conflict, before recovering to about 1,500 to the dollar.

In addition, the U.N.'s oil-for-food deal with Iraq, which was expected to get underway around the middle of September, has been put on hold.

The deal, which would allow Iraq to sell dlns 2 billion of oil every six months to buy food and medicine, will give Iraq its first economic relief since comprehensive U.N. sanctions were imposed following Iraq's

1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party insists its alliance with Saddam's military will last only long enough to cripple the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

But some Kurds fear it could be just the invitation Iraq needs to bully its way back into the region.

Pictures of Saddam were stripped down after the Gulf War and replaced with the icons of the two Kurdish factions: Massoud Barzani in the Democratic Party areas and Jalal Talabani in the Patriotic Union zones.

"I trust Barzani like a brother but even a brother can be fooled by a clever enemy," said Hussein Mustafa, 60, who has a small stall that sells fresh yogurt in Irbil. "Can we ever be sure of Saddam? No, never."

"You are right," yelled meat seller Abdi Rasul, arranging a cow's head on the sidewalk. "Only God and Saddam knows what he will do next. For me, I would like him as far away as possible, but he seems to be coming closer."

Kurds have good reason to be apprehensive. Thousands of Kurds were killed in 1988 after Saddam's poison gas attack and 2 million fled to neighboring Iran and Turkey when Baghdad's army crushed a Kurdish rebellion in 1991.

The nearly exhausted economy in northern Iraq limps along. The only reliable supply of goods and fuel come from Turkey, where truckers wait for days in lines miles (kilometers) long at the border.

"We are under a double embargo: the U.N. embargo against Iraq, and Iraq's embargo against the Kurds," said

Kemal Al-Rashid, a teacher from Zakho near the Turkish border.

"How long can you live on hope?"

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^Iraq Gains in the North, Suffers Limited Punishment<

^With Iraq-Kurds

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — A young Iraqi soldier digging a trench put down his shovel and looked over his shoulder before quickly jabbing his fingers into the air in a V-for-victory sign. Then he went back to work.

The sweaty conscript's furtive gesture summed up President Saddam Hussein's latest muscle-flexing in northern Iraq: he and his troops have made enough gains to claim triumph but they've mostly kept quiet about it.

In the past week, Saddam's forces captured the key northern city of Irbil in the Kurdish safe haven, handed it over to an allied Kurdish faction and weathered a U.S. missile strike, all without major losses. On Sunday, Iraqi and Kurdish troops reportedly attacked two towns outside Irbil.

"It was nearly perfect for Saddam," Faisal Hammidi, a retired Baghdad University professor in Irbil, said of Iraq's move on the city. "It was big enough for Saddam to show the world he's still around, but local enough so the world didn't come crashing down on him like before."

The offensive prompted the United States to fire 44 missiles at air defenses in southern Iraq and led to an expansion of the no-fly zone in the north, where Saddam risks a Western response if he sends aircraft.

The Americans proclaimed the missile attacks a success and warned of further strikes if Saddam unleashed his army again. U.S. officials noted that Iraq withdrew its army from Irbil following the U.S. attack.

However, Saddam could legitimately claim victories of his own.

Once again, he has managed to exploit divisions among the 3.5 million Kurds who make up most of the population in northern Iraq.

His army aligned with one faction, the Kurdish Democratic Party, to take control of Irbil from a rival faction, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

It now appears that Saddam has more influence in northern Iraq than at any time since 1991, when the safe haven was established by the Americans and their allies after Saddam moved in to crush a post-Gulf War Kurdish uprising.

His losses have been relatively minor. Iraq's air force and its air defense systems have not been effective since the Gulf War, and even before the U.S. airstrikes they were not expected to play a decisive role.

Saddam depends largely on several divisions of Republican Guard troops, his best-trained and best-equipped fighters, and they were untouched by the American strikes.

Saddam also exposed the difficulty Washington faces in maintaining a united, hard-line Western response to his actions. The Americans received only mixed international support for their military strikes in Iraq.

And while Iraq's military pulled out of Irbil, the secret police remained behind and the tanks and artillery moved only a few miles (kilometers) to the south, putting them in position to strike again on short notice.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party insists that its alliance with Saddam's military will last only long enough to cripple its rival. But some Kurds fear it could be just the invitation Iraq needs to bully its way back into the region.

Kurds have good reason to be apprehensive. Thousands of Kurds were killed in 1988 in Iraqi poison gas attacks and 2 million fled to neighboring Iran and Turkey when Baghdad's army crushed the 1991 Kurdish rebellion.

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^Kurds in Northeast Iraq Flee as Offensive Presses Ahead<

^EDs: UPDATES with Kurdish faction saying refugees fleeing areas in northeast Iraq, minor editing to trim.<

^AP Photos Available<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — Kurdish refugees streamed out of towns in the northeast and headed toward the Iranian border in the wake of an offensive by a Kurdish faction allied with President Saddam Hussein.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, which has teamed up with the Iraqi military, captured two more towns Sunday in an ongoing offensive taking it eastward into territory controlled by the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Iraqi forces appeared to be moving behind the front-line KDP fighters, but were not playing a major role in the fighting, according to most accounts.

The KDP appeared to have its eyes on two key targets — the Dokan Dam, which controls power in the region, and the city of Sulaymaniyah, the last major PUK stronghold.

The Patriotic Union claimed that thousands of people fled the towns captured Sunday, and thousands more were already fleeing Sulaymaniyah, fearing an imminent attack on the city.

“There is panic among the population of (Sulaymaniyah),” the PUK said in a statement issued from its offices outside Washington.

“A humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding and the international community is standing idly by.”

The exact size of the exodus could not be independently confirmed. But it was clear that growing numbers were fleeing their homes as the KDP offensive gathered momentum.

Fighting side-by-side, the Iraqi forces and the KDP on Aug. 31 captured Irbil, the de facto capital of the Kurdish safe haven established in northern Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War.

The United States responded last week with missile attacks targeting air defense sites in southern Iraq. Since the U.S. strike, Iraqi forces appear to have refrained from direct involvement in the battles between the rival Kurdish groups.

But Iraq placed its heavy weaponry only a few kilometers (miles) behind the front-line positions of its KDP allies. Almost 100 Iraqi tanks and dozens of artillery pieces could be seen in the region in recent days.

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry told the CBS television network on Sunday that some Iraqi troops “are still nearby and still dangerous.”

The PUK has insisted that Iraqi forces are taking part. And it said the combined Iraq-KDP troops were advancing on Sulaymaniyah from three directions — north, south and west — giving civilians no where to go but east toward the Iranian border.

The latest reports have stirred memories of the 1991 refugee crisis in northern when Saddam's army crushed a Kurdish rebellion in the weeks after the Gulf War, prompting up to 2 million Kurdish refugees to flee into Iran and Turkey.

The United States and its allies then established a safe haven for the Kurds. However, Kurdish infighting has kept the region unstable and set the scene for the recent intervention by Iraqi forces.

The Kurdish factions have military forces that are roughly similar in size, but the KDP has advancing steadily against the PUK forces this month.

In Sunday's fighting, the KDP overran the towns of Degala and Kuysanjaq, about 30 and 50 kilometers (20 and 30 miles) east of Irbil.

The KDP said it was seeking to gain control of the nearby Dokan Dam, site of a hydro-electric plant. The PUK still controls the plant and cut power and water to Irbil after being driven out of the city, the KDP said.

The Americans have made clear that their overriding concern is Saddam's army, and they do not want to take sides in the Kurdish conflict.

“We should not be involved in civil war in the north,” Perry

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The Americans have made clear that their overriding concern is Saddam's army, and they do not want to take sides in the Kurdish conflict.

"We should not be involved in civil war in the north," Perry said. He said any retaliatory attacks would take place "where our interests are."

Washington also expanded the southern "no fly" zone this past week to further limit Saddam's capabilities.

About half of Iraq, comprising wide swaths of both the north and the south, are off-limits to Saddam's aircraft.

Saddam said last week that Iraq would no longer honor the no-fly zone and would target U.S. and allied aircraft that fly dozens of missions daily over the exclusionary zones.

The Iraqi News Agency said the aircraft made 99 flights Sunday over the newly expanded southern no-fly zone, and 12 over the northern exclusionary zone.

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^Greece Opposes Turkish Plan For Buffer Zone In Northern Iraq<

ATHENS, Greece (AP) _ Greece opposes Turkey's plan to set up a buffer zone inside northern Iraq, saying that this would undermine Iraq's sovereignty and international treaties.

''This development raises alarming concerns from many points of view,'' Premier Costas Simitis said in a letter to U.S. President Bill Clinton made public on Monday.

''It has a direct destabilizing effect in the area, it violates basic principles of international law, it circumscribes relevant U.N. resolutions and creates a most dangerous precedent for the region and elsewhere,'' Simitis said.

The letter was dated Sept. 6 and was in response to a letter sent by Clinton to the leaders of EU member states on Sept. 3 asking them to support U.S. military action against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein last week.

Turkey has said it plans to enforce a security zone as wide as 2 kilometers (12 miles) along the mountainous border to guard against attacks by Kurdish rebels operating from Iraq. The U.S. has said that it backs this proposal although last year it opposed a similar Turkish plan.

''Greece considers (it) essential to ensure full respect for the existing territorial status quo in this area as defined by longstanding international treaties. All the more so since Greece has recently been faced with territorial claims on the part of Turkey,'' Simitis wrote.

Turkey has questioned Greece's sovereignty of some islets in the eastern Aegean Sea and only U.S. intervention averted a military clash between the two NATO allies in late January. Turkey has rejected Greece's suggestion that it take its case to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, proposing instead a direct dialogue.

Athens says that Ankara is undermining the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which established Turkey's borders, including those with Greece and with Iran and Iraq.

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^Iraq Offers To Cooperate With Turkey To Keep Kurdish Rebels Out<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - In a sign that Baghdad has strengthened its hold in Kurdish-controlled areas, Iraq on Monday offered to cooperate with Ankara to keep Turkish Kurdish rebels from crossing into Turkey.

Iraqi ambassador Rafi Dahham Mejwel El-Tikriti met with Deputy Foreign Minister Onur Oymen to relay Baghdad's opposition to Turkish moves to establish a buffer zone along its 330-kilometer (200-mile) border with northern Iraq.

"We will not accept anything that is against Iraq's sovereignty," El-Tikriti told reporters. "We could cooperate on the basis of mutual understanding, but Turkish soldiers should not enter northern Iraq," the ambassador said.

El-Tikriti did not say what kind of cooperation was possible with Turkey to prevent Turkish Kurdish rebels from infiltrating.

Iraqi Kurds established a de facto state in northern Iraq with the help of a U.S.-led allied air force after the Gulf War.

Turkey and Iraq used to have a "hot pursuit agreement" which allowed Turkish troops to enter into northern Iraq in pursuit of Turkish Kurdish rebels. Turkey took advantage of the agreement several times before the Gulf War.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, have been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Monday that Turkey's aim was not to send troops inside Iraq.

Iraq moved into northern Iraq after the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, asked for its military support against a rival Kurdish group last month.

The KDP controls parts of northern Iraq adjacent to Turkey.

Egypt and other Arab nations have criticized Turkey's moves to establish the buffer zone, calling the act a violation of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On Monday, President Suleyman Demirel spoke by with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to explain Turkey's aims, a presidential statement said.

Turkish-Kurdish fighting has cost some 21,000 lives since 1984.

Turkish troops killed 39 Kurdish rebels in the southeastern Turkish provinces of Sirnak, Siirt, Hakkari, Van and Diyarbakir, the Anatolia news agency said Monday. One Turkish soldier was also killed in the fighting in Hakkari province.

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^BC-US-Iraq

^Clinton Calls On Kurds To End Conflict<

^With Iraq-Kurds<

^By JIM ABRAMS=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ President Bill Clinton said on Monday the United States is doing all it can ``to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq,`` but declined to offer direct assistance to stranded U.S.-backed opponents of Saddam Hussein.

Clinton would not comment on reports that about 200 Iraqis who belong to the U.S.-financed Iraqi National Congress are holed up at a mountain resort, fearful that the United States has abandoned them since Saddam's forces captured the city of Irbil eight days ago.

``I think it would be better for me not to comment now,`` Clinton said. ``We're doing everything we think we can to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq.``

He appealed to fighting Kurdish forces to avoid ``any cavalier killing of civilians and others who are not combatants in this,`` and said U.S. assistance would be pointless if Kurdish leaders continue to promote fighting.

``I would still like to do more to help the Kurds,`` Clinton said. ``But frankly, if you want the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table and talk it through.``

The U.S. government has sponsored the Iraqi National Congress since the Gulf War as a means of fomenting opposition to Saddam. But the organization was effectively broken up by Saddam's military provocations in Iraq's Kurdish north.

Administration officials appearing on the Sunday news programs made clear that U.S. strategic interests lie in the South, where Iraq borders the oil-rich nations of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and not in involvement in the complex factional fighting in the Kurdish north.

``We should not be involved in civil war in the north,`` Defense Secretary William Perry said. ``We should focus our actions where our interests are.``

Saddam, at the invitation of one of the Kurdish factions, on Aug 31 violated the Kurdish ``safe haven`` zone by sending some 40,000 troops into the Kurdish capital of Irbil.

The Clinton administration responded by firing cruise missiles at Iraqi anti-missile sites in southern Iraq and extending to the outskirts of Baghdad the ``no-fly`` zone set up after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War.

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Saddam-Backed Kurdish Faction Charges East in Apparent Rout of Rivals

Eds: UPDATES with U.N. guards chief reporting KDP has taken over Sulaymaniyah. No pickup.

AP Photos BAG101;ANK102;IRB103

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

DOKAN, Iraq (AP) - With yellow ribbons tied to their guns, a Kurdish faction backed by Saddam Hussein stormed across northeastern Iraq, turning a 10-day-old battle against Kurdish rebels into a rout Monday.

As allied Iraqi forces trailed close behind, the Kurdistan Democratic Party appeared headed for a sweeping victory in the region against the crumbling resistance of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The head of a United Nations guards unit in Sulaymaniyah, Stafford Clarry, reported the town had fallen to the KDP after the PUK forces abandoned their posts. Kurdish groups did not immediately confirm the account.

If the loss of Sulaymaniyah is confirmed, the Iraqi president will effectively have influence over much of northern Iraq for the first time since the U.S.-led forces established a Kurdish "safe haven" after the 1991 Gulf War.

The United States, which launched missile strikes against southern Iraq last week, has made clear it has no plans to take sides in the fighting between the Kurdish factions.

The missile strikes appeared to discourage Iraqi forces from taking a direct role in the fighting, but it has not slowed the KDP. With Iraqi help, the KDP captured Irbil, the de facto capital of the Kurdish region, on Aug. 31.

The KDP has been fighting its way eastward since and on Monday took Dokan, a strategic town about 60 miles (95 kilometers) east of Irbil. Dokan is the site of a major dam that controls the water and power supplies to the region.

A long convoy of KDP fighters headed east toward the town with strips of yellow ribbon - the faction's color - tied to their guns.

Some Dokan residents offered water to KDP fighters and waved yellow flags, yelling "piroz be!" - congratulations in Kurdish.

As his fighters entered the town, KDP leader Massoud Barzani stood on a hill just outside Dokan, saluting his men as they entered. "This is the end of the collaborator," he said, referring to PUK leader Jalal Talabani's alliance with Iran.

Traveling in trucks, taxis and even old Mercedes-Benz sedans, the KDP troops encountered a few sniper ambushes, but quickly responded with heavy artillery fire into hills covered with dry golden grass.

The PUK had put up stiff resistance until Monday, but appeared unable to hold back the onslaught any longer.

The KDP has long coveted Sulaymaniyah, 35 miles (55 kms) to the southeast and the last major PUK stronghold in the region.

Both sides agreed the city was likely to fall soon and, according to a U.N. spokesman, as many as 50,000 civilians have fled the city since Monday morning.

The refugees were heading to Iran, but the Tehran government said Monday night it would not allow them to enter its territory.

Iraqi forces appeared to be advancing across the region behind the front-line KDP fighters but were not playing a major role in the fighting, according to most accounts.

United Nations guards in Sulaymaniyah said it appeared most of the Patriotic Union leadership had fled, possibly across the border to Iran.

However, PUK leader Talabani remained earlier Monday in Sulaymaniyah. He made an urgent appeal for help, but seemed resigned to the fact that the Americans would not come to his rescue.

"The United States is not in a position that can obstruct a (KDP) invasion, which is a kind of support indirectly to Saddam," he told a group of journalists that included Associated Press Television.

He also predicted that KDP leader Barzani would come to regret his alliance with Saddam after the fighting was finished.

"In aligning with Baghdad, the KDP has mounted a tiger which will destroy us all," the PUK statement said. "Once Saddam controls Kurdistan, he will no longer need his Kurdish ally and will consume the KDP and what remains of the Kurdish people."

In Washington, President Clinton said the situation won't be resolved until the Kurds stop fighting among themselves.

"I would still like to do more to help the Kurds," Clinton said. "But frankly, if you want the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table and talk it through."

The Patriotic Union said thousands of people fled the towns captured in recent days, and thousands more were fleeing Sulaymaniyah.

"There is a huge exodus from the city as the Iraqi army makes preparations to attack," said Shazad Saib, a PUK official in Ankara, Turkey.

Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said from Geneva that the latest reports indicated "8,000 to 10,000 people leaving Sulaymaniyah since this morning. There may be many more already."

"The situation seems to be snowballing fast," he said. "Whether it will continue or not we have no idea. But this is already a big difference from Irbil."

In another development, the Washington Post reported about 200 Iraqi Arab dissidents were holed up in the northern town of Salahuddin and feared for their lives. The men fled the northern city of Irbil shortly before the combined Iraqi-KDP forces stormed the city on Aug. 31.

The men are members of the Iraqi National Congress, an umbrella organization of Iraqi dissident groups that is funded by the CIA and claims thousands of members, according to the Post.

With CIA help, the congress has spread anti-Saddam propaganda, including leaflets, books and radio and television broadcasts. But it has not been involved in any significant military operations against Saddam.

Clinton declined to comment on the report, but said: "We're doing everything we think we can to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq."

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APW VVV53 Aa ----- Kurdish Faction Charges East in Apparen 09-09 10:11p

EC-Iraq-Kurds, 6th Ld, 0521

Kurdish Faction Charges East in Apparent Rout of Rivals

EDs: UPDATES with Iran saying it will not accept refugees, ADDS description of scene in Dokan.

AP Photos IRB103, ANK102, BAG101

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

DOKAN, Iraq (AP) - With yellow ribbons tied to their guns, Kurdish fighters backed by Saddam Hussein stormed across northeastern Iraq, turning a 10-day-old battle against Kurdish rebels into a rout Monday.

With allied Iraqi forces trailing close behind, the Kurdistan Democratic Party appeared headed for a sweeping victory in the region against the crumbling resistance of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

If this happens, the Iraqi president will effectively have influence over northern Iraq for the first time since the U.S.-led forces established a Kurdish "safe haven" after the 1991 Gulf War.

The United States, which launched missile strikes against southern Iraq last week, has made clear it has no plans to take sides in the fighting between the Kurdish factions.

The missile strikes appeared to discourage Iraqi forces from taking a direct role in the fighting, but it has not slowed the KDP. With Iraqi help, the KDP captured Irbil, the main city of the Kurdish region, on Aug. 31.

The KDP has been fighting its way eastward and on Monday took the strategic town of Dokan, almost 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Irbil. Dokan is the site of a major dam that controls the water and power supplies to the region.

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Traveling in trucks, taxis and even old Mercedes sedans, the KDP troops encountered a few sniper ambushes, but quickly responded with heavy artillery fire into hills covered with dry golden grass.

The PUK had put up stiff resistance until Monday, but appeared unable to hold back the onslaught any longer.

The KDP is now targeting Sulaymaniyah, only 60 kilometers (37 miles) to the southeast, and the last major PUK stronghold in the region.

Both sides agreed the city was likely to fall and, according to a U.N. spokesman in Geneva, as many as 10,000 civilians have fled the city since Monday morning.

The refugees were heading to Iran, but the Tehran government said Monday night it would not allow them to enter its territory.

Instead, Iran will be prepared to assist an international relief operation by allowing the use of its territory to reach the displaced Kurds, according to Ahmed Hosseini, director of expatriate and refugee affairs in Iran's interior ministry.

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^US Supports Turkish Moves Against PKK<

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The U.S. State Department expressed support Monday for Turkey's decision to establish a buffer zone along its 200-mile (320-kilometer) border with Iraq in an attempt to neutralize separatist Turkish Kurds.

Until Monday, the administration had expressed understanding for the Turkish move but department spokesman Nicholas Burns went a step further by offering outright support.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher discussed the issue over the week with Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, and that U.S. support is based on her assurances about the restrictions on Turkish military action, Burns said.

"We have been told by the Turkish government that this action will be limited in duration, that there will be no stationing of Turkish troops inside northern Iraq," Burns said.

"We understand, because we're Turkey's ally, that Turkey has legitimate security concerns about its border because of the past activities of the PKK," he said.

Insurgents belonging to the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, maintain bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of their fight for autonomy.

Last year, Turkey dispatched 35,000 soldiers into northern Iraq in an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the rebels. More than 21,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish fighting since 1984.

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[Iranian]

APW VVV52 Aa ----- Kurdish Faction Charges East in Apparen 09-09 7:38p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld-Writethru,0869

Kurdish Faction Charges East in Apparent Rout of Rivals

Eds: RECASTS lead; UPDATES with 19 new grafs of details on the fighting, additional comment from Kurdish groups; SUBS old grafs 17 and 18 with UPDATED estimates of refugees, new UNHCR quote; ADDS photo numbers.

AP Photos IRB103, ANK102, BAG101

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

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With allied Iraqi forces trailing close behind their fighters, the Kurdistan Democratic Party appeared headed for a sweeping victory against the crumbling resistance of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

If this happens, the Iraqi president will effectively have seized a position of influence over northern Iraq for the first time since U.S.-led allies established a Kurdish "safe haven" in the area after the 1991 Gulf War.

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Traveling in trucks, taxis and old Mercedes sedans, the KDP troops encountered a few sniper ambushes, but quickly responded with heavy artillery fire into hills covered with dry golden grass.

The PUK put up stiff resistance until Monday, but appeared unable to hold back the onslaught any longer.

The KDP is now targeting Sulaymaniyah, only 60 kilometers (37 miles) to the southeast, and the last major PUK stronghold in the region.

Both sides agreed the city was likely to fall.

"As a result of the political and military collapse of (the PUK), the fall of Sulaymaniyah, their last bastion, is near," the KDP said in a statement issued in London.

Sulaymaniyah "is in imminent danger of collapse," the PUK conceded in its own statement issued from suburban Washington.

Iraqi forces appeared to be advancing behind the front-line KDP fighters, but the Iraqis were not playing a major role in the fighting, according to most accounts.

U.N. guards in Sulaymaniyah said it appeared most of the Patriotic Union leadership had fled, possibly across the border to Iran.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani remained in Sulaymaniyah. He made an urgent appeal for help, but seemed resigned to the fact that the Americans would not come to his rescue.

"The United States is not in a position that can obstruct an invasion, which is a kind of support indirectly to Saddam," he told a group of journalists, including AP Television.

He also predicted that KDP leader Massoud Barzani would come to regret his alliance with Saddam after the fighting was finished.

"In aligning with Baghdad, the KDP has mounted a tiger which will destroy us all," the PUK statement said. "Once Saddam controls Kurdistan, he will no longer need his Kurdish ally and will consume the KDP and what remains of the Kurdish people."

The Patriotic Union claimed that thousands of people fled the towns captured in recent days, and thousands more were fleeing Sulaymaniyah, fearing an imminent assault.

"There is a huge exodus from the city as the Iraqi army makes preparations to attack," said Shazad Saib, a PUK official in Ankara, Turkey.

But in Kuysanjaq, a town that fell to the KDP on Sunday, only about 40 families fled, Mayor Ashir Jamal said Monday.

Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said in Geneva that as many as 10,000 people had fled their homes in the region, but there was no mass exodus so far.

"The situation seems to be snowballing fast ... The situation is getting pretty worrying now because substantial movement is taking place. Whether it will continue or not we have no idea. But this is already a big difference from Irbil."

He said the UNHCR was working to have resources in place at both the Iranian border to the east, and the Iraq-Turkey border to the north.

The Washington Post reported that about 200 Iraqi Arab dissidents were holed up in the northern town of Salahuddin and feared for their lives. The men fled the northern city of Irbil shortly before the combined Iraqi-KDP forces stormed the city on Aug. 31.

The men are members of the Iraqi National Congress, an umbrella organization of Iraqi dissident groups that is funded by the CIA, according to the Post.

[Cyprus]

APW VVV49 Aa ----- Kurdish Rebels Lose Two Towns to Rival 09-09 3:15a

BC-Iraq-Kurds,0925

Kurdish Rebels Lose Two Towns to Rival Faction

Eds: Recaps previous.

AP Photos IRB101, ANK101

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - A Kurdish faction backed by the government appeared to have the region's major power source in its sights as it captured two towns from a rival Kurdish group in northern Iraq.

The two groups had conflicting claims about whether President Saddam Hussein's forces were involved in the attacks Sunday on Degala and Kuysanjaq, which lie along a route toward the Dokan Dam.

Iraq repeated its claims of Friday and Saturday that it had fired anti-aircraft weapons at U.S. and allied aircraft patrolling no-fly zones over its territory. The Iraqi fire Sunday missed and the planes fled, the official Iraqi News Agency said.

American pilots have said they have detected no Iraqi response to their sorties.

Since capturing Irbil with the help of Saddam's forces on Aug. 31, the Kurdistan Democratic Party has been moving north and east into territory controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

They KDP said it was heading for the dam, which is still controlled by the PUK, and appeared also to be heading further east for Sulaymaniyah, the last major PUK stronghold.

Both groups agreed that the towns, 30 and 50 kilometers (20 and 30 miles) east of Irbil, changed hands amid heavy fighting.

But the KDP said in a statement from London that it launched the assaults on its own, while PUK spokesman Latif Rashid, speaking to The Associated Press from London, said the faction was overwhelmed by the combined forces of the Iraqi army and the KDP.

The Iraqi government said its forces were not involved. "We stress once again that our armed forces have already returned in full to their previous positions," an Information Ministry source told the state-run Iraqi News Agency.

No details of the fighting were available, and there was no word on casualties.

Iraqi forces teamed up with the KDP on Aug. 31 to capture Irbil, the de facto capital of the Kurdish safe haven established in northern Iraq after the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

The United States responded with missile attacks on southern Iraq on Tuesday and Wednesday, hammering air defense sites in southern Iraq.

Since then, the Iraqi forces appear to have refrained from playing a major role in the battles between the rival Kurdish groups.

But Iraq placed its heavy weaponry only a few kilometers (miles) behind the front-line positions of its KDP allies. Almost 100 Iraqi tanks could be seen in the region on Friday, and Defense Secretary William Perry, speaking on CBS' "Face the Nation," said Sunday that some Iraqi troops "are still nearby and still dangerous."

A United Nations officer in Irbil, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a force made up mainly of KDP fighters, but aided by some Iraqi government troops, was moving to the east on Sunday. He said the intense fighting prevented U.N. officials from going to the scene.

In Washington, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John Shalikashvili told NBC's "Meet the Press" that Saddam "is clearly exploiting the difference between those two Kurdish factions."

But he said "very, very few" Iraqi troops were still in the safe haven area. "There continue to be reports of a few hundred here, a few hundred there."

The KDP said it was pushing east toward the Dokan Dam hydroelectric plant. The group said the PUK, which controls the plant, cut power and water to Irbil after being driven out a week ago. It said Irbil, a city of about 1 million, was suffering from "severe water and sanitation problems."

According to the PUK, many families fled Kuysanjaq, a town of about 80,000, in response to Sunday's fighting.

The group appealed for "urgent and decisive" help from the United States and its allies.

But the Americans have made clear they do not want to take sides in Kurdish infighting. The missile attacks last week targeted southern Iraq, and Washington has taken no action in the north.

"We should not be involved in civil war in the north," Perry said. He said any retaliatory attacks would take place "where our interests are."

Shalikashvili said there are signs that Saddam is trying to repair the surface-to-air missile sites damaged in the U.S. raids.

"We have warned Saddam Hussein that any attempt to repair those sites or reinforce them will be taken very seriously," he said.

Washington also expanded the southern "no fly" zone this past week to further limit Saddam's offensive capabilities.

About half of Iraq, comprising wide swaths of both the north and the south, are off-limits to Saddam's aircraft. The zones were established after a U.S.-led military coalition drove Saddam's occupation forces out of Kuwait in the Gulf War.

Saddam said last week that Iraq would no longer honor the no-fly zone and would target U.S. and allied aircraft that fly dozens of missions daily over the exclusionary zones.

The Iraqi News Agency said the aircraft made 99 flights Sunday over the newly expanded southern no-fly zone, and 12 over the northern exclusionary zone.

Along the border with Turkey, meanwhile, Kurdish rebels killed nine soldiers in ambushes of army patrols, the government said. Turkey has said it will send troops into northern Iraq to prevent Kurdish rebels from crossing its border.

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^BC-Iraq-Frightened Village,450<

^In Northern Iraq, Villagers Also Fear Turkish Troops<

^By +YALMAN+ +ONARAN+=

^Associated Press Writer=

TIRWANISH VILLAGE, Iraq (AP) + The windows have no glass. Furniture is covered with dust and spider webs.

This village on the Iraq-Turkey border became a ghost town in July when residents fled a Turkish military attack aimed at Turkey's own rebellious Kurds based in the region.

Some 100 Iraqi villagers are now living in tents in the nearby village of Kani Mase, but they fear they will come under attack again as Turkey talks about forming a ``security zone'' in northern Iraq.

``We heard the Turkish soldiers will come again + we're afraid,'' said Haji Islam Rasho Ahmet, an elderly refugee said in an interview at Kani Mase.

The scene in this village illustrates the chaos that reigns in northern Iraq today, where numerous armed groups are active but no one is in full control.

The main battle at present is between rival Iraqi Kurdish factions, one of them backed by President Saddam Hussein's army. But Turkish and Iranian forces have also been active in recent years in northern Iraq, turning the area into a free-fire zone.

Turkey doesn't want its Kurdish rebels to take advantage of the current chaos and launch strikes from northern Iraq into southeast Turkey.

But ordinary Iraqi villagers in the north suffer every time a raid is carried out, and they fear they will be chased from their makeshift homes.

``First Saddam struck us and we ran away. Then the Iranians struck and we ran away. Then the Turks did and we ran again,'' Tahir Cello Omer, a 52-year-old man from Tirwanish, said as he recounted the trauma of the past several years.

``This has become a way of life for us + fleeing,'' he said.

Saddam sent his tanks and bombers into northern Iraq to quell a Kurdish uprising in 1991, shortly after the Gulf War. Thousands died and up to 2 million Kurdish refugees fled to Turkey and Iran.

Since then, northern Iraq has been a no-fly zone for Saddam's aircraft, patrolled by the U.S.-led air force.

But that has not kept Turkey, a key U.S. ally, from launching its own strikes in the north.

``Turkish troops are all over the place all the time,'' said Samia Sandik, a 50-year-old woman with five children and 11 grandchildren.

``We escaped Tirwanish leaving everything behind. All I have is these clothes I am wearing,'' she said in a tale told by many displaced residents in northern Iraq. ``Please save us from this misery.''

The Turkish military has targeted a nearby mountain where Turkish rebels roam, but many shells fall in Kani Mase, leaving craters in peach gardens, hitting barns and in some cases, homes.

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^AM-Turkey-Iraq,0297<

● Iraq Offers To Cooperate With Turkey To Keep Kurdish Rebels Out<

^With AM-Iraq-Kurds, Bjt<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) ÷ In a sign that Baghdad has strengthened its hold in Kurdish-controlled areas, Iraq offered Monday to cooperate with Turkey to keep Kurdish rebels from crossing into Turkey.

Iraqi Ambassador Rafi Dahham Mejwel El-Tikriti said Baghdad opposes Turkey's attempts to establish a buffer zone along its 200-mile border with northern Iraq.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Monday that Turkey's aim was not to send troops inside Iraq, but to control Kurdish rebels who battle Turkey from bases inside Iraq.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, have been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984. Turkish-Kurdish fighting has cost some 21,000 lives since 1984, including 39 Kurdish rebels and one Turkish soldier killed in fighting over the weekend, the Anatolia news agency said Monday.

An Iraqi delegation, led by Hamed Yousef Humadi, an adviser to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, will visit Ankara on Tuesday to relay Iraq's position against the security zone, the Iraqi news agency said.

Turkey and Iraq used to have a ``hot pursuit agreement'' that allowed Turkish troops to enter northern Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish rebels, which Turkey did several times before the Persian Gulf War.

Iraqi Kurds established a de facto state in northern Iraq with the help of a U.S.-led allied air force after war.

● Iraq sent its forces into northern Iraq after the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, asked for its military support against a rival Kurdish group last month. The KDP controls parts of northern Iraq adjacent to Turkey.

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^U.S. Likely To Avoid Fight In Northern Iraq, Officials Say<

^Eds: UPDATES throughout with Dole statement, recasts lead; edits to tighten<

^With Iraq-Kurds<

^By JIM ABRAMS=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton said on Monday the United States is doing all it can "to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq," but declined to say whether that includes direct assistance to stranded U.S.-backed opponents of Saddam Hussein.

Clinton would not comment on reports that about 200 Iraqis who belong to the U.S.-financed Iraqi National Congress are holed up at a mountain resort, fearful that the United States has abandoned them since Saddam's forces captured the city of Irbil eight days ago.

"I think it would be better for me not to comment now," Clinton said. "We're doing everything we think we can to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq."

He appealed to fighting Kurdish forces to avoid "any cavalier killing of civilians and others who are not combatants in this," and said U.S. assistance would be pointless if Kurdish leaders continue to promote fighting.

"I would still like to do more to help the Kurds," Clinton said. "But frankly, if you want the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table and talk it through."

The U.S. government has sponsored the Iraqi National Congress since the Gulf War as a means of fomenting opposition to Saddam. But the organization was effectively broken up by Saddam's military provocations in Iraq's Kurdish north.

Clinton answered questions from reporters after receiving an aviation safety report in the Oval Office. Meanwhile, Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole issued a statement citing reports of continued killings in Iraq, including executions of U.S.-backed opponents of Saddam.

"The Clinton administration should be careful about making claims of success that events on the ground may not substantiate, and about giving assurances that it is unable or unwilling to fulfill," Dole said, "because the credibility of the United States is at stake."

Administration officials appearing on the Sunday news programs made clear that U.S. strategic interests lie in the South, where Iraq borders the oil-rich nations of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and not in involvement in the complex factional fighting in the Kurdish north.

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BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru,0700

Precede DOKAN

Saddam-Backed Kurdish Faction Takes Control of North

Eds: UPDATES throughout with Tuesday details, Kurdish faction pouring into Sulaymaniyah

AP Photos available

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq (AP) - Kurdish fighters backed by Saddam Hussein celebrated their sweeping victory in northern Iraq with an impromptu parade Tuesday in the streets of this strategic city.

Soldiers from the Kurdistan Democratic Party waved their yellow flags and shouted victory slogans through loudspeakers as they marched through the streets.

A group of 10 men carried a 10-foot-high (3-meter-high) picture of KDP leader Massoud Barzani to the headquarters of the vanquished Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Children followed behind with makeshift banners of their own.

The KDP, which is allied with Saddam's army, on Monday night rolled into Sulaymaniyah, the last PUK stronghold in northern Iraq.

As a result, Saddam now has effective control over northern Iraq for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War, when the U.S.-led forces established a "safe haven" for the Kurds.

U.S. missile strikes against southern Iraq last week seemed to deter the Iraqi army from taking part in the fighting. But with Iraqi forces marching right behind the KDP, the faction easily defeated its Kurdish rival.

While the main streets in Sulaymaniyah were filled with celebrants, thousands of residents have fled east toward the Iranian border, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) away over rugged mountain terrain.

About 50,000 of Sulaymaniyah's 400,000 people fled in advance of the offensive, Stafford Clarry, the head of a U.N. guard unit in Sulaymaniyah, said Monday night.

The Iraqis and the KDP teamed up on Aug. 31 to capture Irbil, the de facto Kurdish capital in the north. After that, the KDP forces headed eastward with the Iraqi tanks and heavy artillery in their wake.

After more than a week of stiff resistance, the PUK collapsed Monday and the KDP advanced throughout the day. KDP fighters with yellow ribbons tied around their guns piled into trucks, taxis and sedans to catch up with the rapidly moving front-line.

In the town of Dokan, residents offered water to KDP fighters and waved yellow flags, yelling "Piroz be!" - "Congratulations" in Kurdish.

As his fighters claimed the town, KDP leader Massoud Barzani stood on a hill just outside, saluting his men as they entered.

"This is the end of the collaborator," he said, referring to PUK leader Jalal Talabani's cooperation with Iran.

The KDP troops encountered a few sniper ambushes, but quickly responded with heavy artillery fire into hills covered with golden grass.

U.N. guards in Sulaymaniyah said it appeared most of the Patriotic Union leadership had fled, possibly to Iran. The group called for international aid for the refugees to prevent a "human catastrophe."

Talabani, the PUK leader, remained in Sulaymaniyah until shortly before its capture Monday. He made an urgent appeal for help, but seemed resigned to the fact that the Americans would not come to his rescue.

"The United States is not in a position that can obstruct a (KDP) invasion, which is a kind of support indirectly to Saddam," he told a group of journalists that included Associated Press Television.

He predicted that KDP leader Barzani would come to regret his alliance of convenience with Saddam.

"In aligning with Baghdad, the KDP has mounted a tiger which will destroy us all," a PUK statement said.

"Once Saddam controls Kurdistan, he will no longer need his Kurdish ally and will consume the KDP and what remains of the Kurdish people," it added.

In Washington, President Clinton said the conflict won't be resolved until the Kurds stop fighting among themselves.

"I would still like to do more to help the Kurds," Clinton said. "But frankly, if you want the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table and talk it through."

BC-Iraq-Kurds,0906

Saddam-Backed Kurdish Faction Takes Control of Rivals' Stronghold

Eds: Recaps previous

AP Photos BAG101;ANK102;IRB103

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

DOKAN, Iraq (AP) - Kurdish allies of Saddam Hussein have captured the last stronghold of their rebel rivals, giving the Iraqi leader control over much of northern Iraq for the first time since the Gulf War.

With Iraqi troops trailing close behind, the Kurdistan Democratic Party claimed control of the city of Sulaymaniyah after the crumbling forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan abandoned their posts, U.N. workers in the city said.

"The PUK had withdrawn and the KDP walked in," said Stafford Clarry, the head of a U.N. guard unit in Sulaymaniyah, Iraqi Kurdistan's second-largest city.

About 50,000 of Sulaymaniyah's 400,000 people fled in advance of the offensive, leaving the city quiet after its fall, Clarry said.

The United States, which launched missile strikes against southern Iraq last week, made clear it has no plans to take sides in the fighting between the Kurdish factions, who have frequently shifted alliances in the course of their conflict.

The missile strikes appeared to discourage Saddam's forces from taking a direct role in the fighting, but it has not slowed the Saddam-allied KDP.

KDP fighters claimed they entered Sulaymaniyah on Monday evening after residents rebelled to force out a rival, Iranian-backed Kurdish faction and its leader, Jalal Talabani.

The city was the last stronghold left in the hands of the PUK forces after they lost Irbil, the area's de facto capital, on Aug. 31 in a KDP offensive backed by the Iraqi army.

The capture of Sulaymaniyah means Saddam effectively wields control over much of northern Iraq for the first time since the U.S.-led forces established a Kurdish "safe haven" after the 1991 Gulf War.

The town of Dokan fell to the KDP earlier in the day, giving the Kurdish group control of a dam that supplies water and power to the region.

A long convoy of KDP fighters entered Dokan with strips of yellow ribbon - the faction's color - tied to their guns.

Some Dokan residents offered water to KDP fighters and waved yellow flags, yelling "Piroz be!" - "Congratulations" in Kurdish.

As his fighters claimed the town, KDP leader Massoud Barzani stood on a hill just outside, saluting his men as they entered.

"This is the end of the collaborator," he said, referring to PUK leader Talabani's alliance with Iran.

Traveling in trucks, taxis and even old Mercedes-Benz sedans, the KDP troops encountered a few sniper ambushes, but quickly responded with heavy artillery fire into hills covered with dry golden grass.

The PUK had put up stiff resistance until Monday, but appeared unable to hold back the onslaught.

Iraqi forces were advancing across the region behind the front-line KDP fighters but were not playing a major role in the fighting, according to most accounts.

U.N. guards in Sulaymaniyah said it appeared most of the Patriotic Union leadership had fled, possibly to Iran.

Thousands of refugees from the fighting already have crossed into Iran, and "tens of thousands are on the move," Iran's mission to the United Nations said in a statement.

It asked for international aid for the refugees to prevent a "human catastrophe."

PUK leader Talabani remained in Sulaymaniyah until its capture Monday. He made an urgent appeal for help, but seemed resigned to the fact that the Americans would not come to his rescue.

"The United States is not in a position that can obstruct a (KDP) invasion, which is a kind of support indirectly to Saddam," he told a group of journalists that included Associated Press Television.

He predicted that KDP leader Barzani would come to regret his alliance of convenience with Saddam.

"In aligning with Baghdad, the KDP has mounted a tiger which will destroy us all," the PUK statement said. "Once Saddam controls Kurdistan, he will no longer need his Kurdish ally and will consume the KDP and what remains of the Kurdish people."

In Washington, President Clinton said the conflict won't be resolved until the Kurds stop fighting among themselves.

"I would still like to do more to help the Kurds," Clinton said. "But frankly, if you want the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table and talk it through."

In another development, the Washington Post reported about 200 Iraqi Arab dissidents were holed up in the northern town of Salahuddin and feared for their lives. The men fled the northern city of Irbil shortly before the combined Iraqi-KDP forces stormed the city on Aug. 31.

The men are members of the Iraqi National Congress, an umbrella organization of Iraqi dissident groups that is funded by the CIA and claims thousands of members, according to the Post.

With CIA help, the congress has spread anti-Saddam propaganda, including leaflets, books and radio and television broadcasts. But it has not been involved in any significant military operations against Saddam.

Clinton declined to comment on the report, but said: "We're doing everything we think we can to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq."

[Kurdish]

APW VVV55 Aa ----- Refugees Flood Out of Iraq Toward Iran 09-10 1:52p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld,0458

Refugees Flood Out of Iraq Toward Iran

Eds: LEADS to UPDATE with U.N. officials estimating up to 300,000 civilians fleeing Sulaymaniyah, comment from Iran, additional details on refugee crisis.

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq (AP) - As many as 300,000 people may have fled this northeastern city after it was captured by Kurdish fighters backed by President Saddam Hussein, U.N. officials said Tuesday.

The tide of refugees swelled so swiftly that its scope was difficult to determine. But it was large enough to evoke memories of a mass exodus in 1991, when more than a half million Kurds fled following a failed Kurdish uprising against Saddam.

U.N. offices in Sulaymaniyah estimated that three-fourths of the city's 400,000 residents had fled to nearby mountains. But remaining residents said the number was too high. Many people were hiding in homes or only went to the outskirts of the city and were likely to return if there was no fighting, they said.

Meanwhile, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which is allied with the Iraqi army, celebrated its sweeping victory in Sulaymaniyah with an impromptu parade in the city.

KDP soldiers waved their yellow flags and shouted victory slogans through loudspeakers as they marched through the city streets.

Ten men carried a 10-foot-high (3-meter-high) picture of KDP leader Massoud Barzani to the headquarters of the vanquished PUK. Children followed behind with makeshift banners of their own.

As a result of Monday's attacks, Saddam now has effective control over northern Iraq for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War, when the U.S.-led forces established a "safe haven" for the Kurds.

U.S. missile strikes against southern Iraq last week seemed to deter the Iraqi army from taking part in the fighting. But with Iraqi forces marching right behind the KDP, the faction easily took control of the last stronghold of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

In neighboring Iran, the government said 200,000 refugees were massed at its border and it did not intend to let them in unless their lives were in danger.

An Interior Ministry official, Ahmad Hosseini, told a news conference in Tehran that Iran had taken in some 100 injured Kurds, but he did not give any details. He said Iran was determined to avoid a repeat of the 1991 refugee crisis.

In Geneva, Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the U.N. refugee agency, said 75,000 refugees were heading for, or were already at the Iraqi border town of Panjwin. Some of those fleeing threw stones at U.N. vehicles in apparent frustration. The Iraqis, pick up 9th graf pvs.

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[Cyprus]

APW VVV56 Aa ----- U.N. Says Up To 300,000 Refugees Flood 09-10 4:46p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld-Writethru,0890

U.N. Says Up To 300,000 Refugees Flood Out of Captured City

Eds: RECASTS and UPDATES with Saddam declaring 'amnesty' for all Kurds, new White House comment.

With AP Graphic

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq (AP) - Waving yellow flags and shouting victory slogans, Saddam Hussein's Kurdish allies marched in triumph Tuesday through Sulaymaniyah as tens of thousands of frightened residents fled the northeastern Iraqi city for nearby mountains and the border with Iran.

As many as 300,000 Kurds may have left, U.N. officials said Tuesday, one day after the Kurdish Democratic Party seized the city. The tide of refugees swelled so swiftly it evoked memories of the Kurdish exodus in 1991, when some 2 million people went to Iran and Turkey after a failed Kurdish uprising against the Iraqi president.

In an attempt by Saddam to reconcile with the Kurds, many of whom fear he will launch another campaign to suppress them, the Iraqi leader Tuesday declared an amnesty for all Kurds - including members of the rebel Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Excluded from the amnesty were people who committed rape or stole state money or property during the recent fighting, Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf announced on state television.

Restrictions on the Kurdish areas were being lifted, suggesting that travel documents and other permits will no longer be needed for people traveling in and out of northern Iraq.

With the DPK's Monday night victory in Sulaymaniyah, the last rebel stronghold, Saddam gained effective control over northern Iraq for the first time since just after the 1991 Gulf War, when the U.S.-led forces established a "safe haven" for the Kurds.

U.N. officials in Sulaymaniyah estimated that 300,000 of the city's 400,000 people had fled. In Geneva, Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the U.N. refugee agency, said that up to 80 percent of residents had left.

Some remaining residents, however, felt those figures were too high. They said many people were hiding in homes or only went to the outskirts of the city and were likely to return if there was no fighting.

U.S. missile strikes against southern Iraq last week seemed to deter the Iraqi army from taking part in the recent battles. But with Iraqi forces marching right behind the KDP, the faction easily defeated its Kurdish rival.

The KDP celebrated with an impromptu parade in Sulaymaniyah Tuesday, with soldiers waving yellow flags and shouting victory slogans through loudspeakers as they marched through the streets.

Some of them carried a 3-meter- (10-foot-) high picture of KDP leader Massoud Barzani to the headquarters of their vanquished rivals. Children followed behind with makeshift banners of their own. Most shops were closed and there was a holiday air in the city.

But in neighboring Iran, the government said 200,000 Kurdish refugees were massed at its border and it did not intend to let them in unless their lives were in danger.

"We won't let them in unless their lives are threatened by gunfire or attacks," Ahmad Hosseini, an Interior Ministry official, told reporters in Tehran, the Iranian capital.

Hosseini said Iran had taken in some 100 injured Kurds, but he did not elaborate. He said Iran was determined to avoid a repeat of the 1991 refugee crisis, when more than a half-million Kurdish refugees flooded into Iran.

In Geneva, Colville said 75,000 refugees were heading for - or already at - the Iraqi border town of Panjwin. Some of those fleeing threw stones at U.N. vehicles in apparent frustration.

The Iraqi military and the KDP teamed up Aug. 31 to capture Irbil, the de facto Kurdish capital in northern Iraq. After that, the KDP forces headed eastward with the Iraqi tanks and heavy artillery in their wake.

After more than a week of stiff resistance, the PUK collapsed Monday and the KDP advanced throughout the day. Traveling in trucks, taxis and even old Mercedes-Benz sedans, the KDP troops encountered a few sniper ambushes, but quickly responded with heavy artillery fire.

As his fighters claimed the town of Dokan on Monday, Barzani stood on a hill just outside, saluting his men as they entered.

"This is the end of the collaborator," he said, referring to PUK leader Jalal Talabani's cooperation with Iran.

Talabani, for his part, predicted that Barzani would come to regret his alliance of convenience with Saddam.

"In aligning with Baghdad, the KDP has mounted a tiger which will destroy us all," a PUK statement said. "Once Saddam controls Kurdistan, he will no longer need his Kurdish ally and will consume the KDP and what remains of the Kurdish people."

In Washington, a spokesman for President Bill, Mike McCurry, said the administration is "continuing to monitor closely the developments."

Clinton has said the conflict won't be resolved until the Kurds stop fighting among themselves.

"I would still like to do more to help the Kurds," Clinton said. "But frankly, if you want the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table and talk it through."

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^Clinton: U.S. Limited in Helping Embattled Kurds<

^Eds: RECAPS previous<

^By JOHN DIAMOND=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ President Clinton said the United States is trying to help anyone who needs to escape the fighting in northern Iraq, but "our ability to control internal events in Iraq is limited."

Other U.S. officials said Monday that only Western government and relief officials were being evacuated from northern Iraq, where ethnic Kurds have raised fears of severe Iraqi reprisals, including summary executions, against anyone suspected of sympathizing with opposition Kurds or the United States.

The situation prompted a rebuke from Clinton's Republican challenger, Bob Dole.

"In Iraq as in Bosnia, the Clinton administration should be careful about making claims of success that events on the ground may not substantiate, and about giving assurances that it is unable or unwilling to fulfill," Dole said. "The credibility of the United States is at stake."

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Dole's criticism was misplaced.

"The former senator is unfortunately attempting to make politics out of an international crisis," McCurry told reporters. He said Clinton had never asserted that his Iraq strategy was designed to end the fighting in northern Iraq. The intent, McCurry said, was to further limit Saddam's ability to threaten his Gulf neighbors.

Clinton, speaking to reporters at an Oval Office photo opportunity, declined to confirm reports that the fighting in the region had scattered Iraqi Kurds and others working with the CIA to destabilize Saddam.

The Washington Post reported Monday that about 200 Iraqi Arabs who belong to the U.S.-financed Iraqi National Congress are holed up at a mountain resort, fearful that the United States has abandoned them since Saddam's forces captured the city of Irbil eight days ago.

While Clinton said "we're doing everything we can to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq," other U.S. officials gave no indication that the United States is providing escort, transportation or other assistance.

Rene Bafalis, spokeswoman for the State Department-led Kurdish relief effort, said the last U.S. aid personnel left northern Iraq last week.

"Our relief operations per se have stopped," Bafalis said.

Air Force Capt. Christina Abbott Marks, spokeswoman for the U.S. and allied no-fly operation based in Turkey, said 23 U.S. service members assigned to the allied Military Coordination Center based in Zakhu, Iraq _ a town in the northern Kurdish zone _ had been evacuated over the border into Turkey. Marks said the coordination center is trying to help American nongovernmental relief organizations get out of danger.

A senior defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, described three organizations whose sympathizers might face reprisals at the hands of the Iraqi military:

_The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which formed an alliance with Iran in the most recent factional fighting that provided Saddam the pretext to send forces into the northern region. U.N. guards said most of the PUK leadership apparently had fled, possibly across the border to Iran. PUK leader Jalal Talabani, however, remained in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. He made an urgent appeal for help but seemed resigned to the fact that the Americans would not come to his rescue.

_The Iraqi National Congress, an organization sponsored by the U.S. government since the 1991 Gulf War as a means of fomenting opposition to Saddam. The organization was effectively broken up by Saddam's military provocations in Iraq's Kurdish north.

_The Military Coordination Center which, while an allied-led operation, hired many locals as translators, janitors and clerical assistants.

Vincent Cannistraro, former director of intelligence programs at the National Security Council, said the United States "has a moral obligation to help save these people who have been working for the U.S. government. ... There is a human disaster in the making."

Cannistraro said Clinton had reportedly approved the operation to destabilize Saddam around the first of the year. He said the CIA was designated the lead agency because its expertise in the complex ethnic and political mix of northern Iraq.

"I would still like to _ to do more to help the Kurds," Clinton said. "But ... for the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table."

r i BC-US-Iraq 1stLd 09-10 0449

233 87 nic ank uni

^BC-US-Iraq, 1st Ld<,0456<

^Clinton: U.S. Limited in Helping Embattled Kurds<

^Eds: ADDS 3 grafs with report of more than 100 dissidents executed<

^By JOHN DIAMOND=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ President Clinton said the United States is trying to help anyone who needs to escape the fighting in northern Iraq, but "our ability to control internal events in Iraq is limited."

Other U.S. officials said Monday that only Western government and relief officials were being evacuated from northern Iraq, where ethnic Kurds have raised fears of severe Iraqi reprisals, including summary executions, against anyone suspected of sympathizing with opposition Kurds or the United States.

The situation prompted a rebuke from Clinton's Republican challenger, Bob Dole.

"In Iraq as in Bosnia, the Clinton administration should be careful about making claims of success that events on the ground may not substantiate, and about giving assurances that it is unable or unwilling to fulfill," Dole said. "The credibility of the United States is at stake."

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Dole's criticism was misplaced.

"The former senator is unfortunately attempting to make political out of an international crisis," McCurry told reporters. He said Clinton had never asserted that his Iraq strategy was designed to end the fighting in northern Iraq. The intent, McCurry said, was to further limit Saddam's ability to threaten his Gulf neighbors.

Clinton, speaking to reporters at an Oval Office photo opportunity, declined to confirm reports that the fighting in the region had scattered Iraqi Kurds and others working with the CIA to destabilize Saddam.

The Washington Post reported Monday that about 200 Iraqi Arabs who belong to the U.S.-financed Iraqi National Congress are holed up at a mountain resort, fearful that the United States has abandoned them since Saddam's forces captured the city of Irbil eight days ago.

The Washington Post reported in its Tuesday editions that more than 100 Iraqi dissidents and military officers associated with a CIA-financed effort to topple Saddam were arrested and executed last June after Iraqi security agents penetrated the group known as the Iraqi National Accord.

About 200 Iraqi Arabs who belong to another U.S.-financed group, the Iraqi National Congress, meanwhile were holed up at a mountain resort with U.S. officials making clear they have no intention of helping to rescue or evacuate them, according to the Post.

The National Congress members were sent into hiding after Saddam's forces captured the Kurdish city of Irbil eight days ago.

^While Clinton, 9th graf<

AP-LD-09-10-96 0346GMT<

[Iranian]

APW VVV57 Aa ----- Iraqi Delegation Holds Talks on Securit 09-10 10:04p

BC-Turkey-Iraq, 1st Ld

Iraqi Delegation Holds Talks on Security Zone in Ankara

Eds: LEADS with Turkish determination to maintain buffer zone, ADDS quotes by Ciller

AP Photo Available

By SELCAN HACAOGLU

Associated Press Writer retract

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey on Tuesday said it would not backtrack from a buffer zone established along its border with northern Iraq to keep out rebel Kurds, despite opposition from Baghdad.

An Iraqi delegation met with Turkish officials Tuesday to express dissatisfaction with the zone, aimed at preventing rebel infiltration from northern Iraq.

"We have conveyed (to Baghdad) our determination to maintain a security zone," Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller told reporters after her meeting with Hamed Yosef Humadi, adviser to President Saddam Hussein.

"Turkey's initiative goes no further than wanting to protect its borders and people," Mrs. Ciller said.

Turkey declared a zone as wide as 20 kilometres (12 miles) in some places along the mountainous border to guard against attacks by Kurdish rebels operating in Iraq.

While opposing 4th graf pvs

(sf/djw)

101906 Sep GMT

[tehran]

APW VVV53 Aa ----- US Supports Turkish Moves Against PKK 09-09 11:31p

BC-US-Turkey

US Supports Turkish Moves Against PKK

WASHINGTON (AP) - The U.S. State Department expressed support Monday for Turkey's decision to establish a buffer zone along its 200-mile (320-kilometer) border with Iraq in an attempt to neutralize separatist Turkish Kurds.

Until Monday, the administration had expressed understanding for the Turkish move but department spokesman Nicholas Burns went a step further by offering outright support.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher discussed the issue over the week with Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, and that U.S. support is based on her assurances about the restrictions on Turkish military action, Burns said.

"We have been told by the Turkish government that this action will be limited in duration, that there will be no stationing of Turkish troops inside northern Iraq," Burns said.

"We understand, because we're Turkey's ally, that Turkey has legitimate security concerns about its border because of the past activities of the PKK," he said.

Insurgents belonging to the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, maintain bases in northern Iraq and stage hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of their fight for autonomy.

Last year, Turkey dispatched 35,000 soldiers into northern Iraq in an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the rebels. More than 21,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish fighting since 1984.

092033 Sep GMT

[Greece]

APW VVV56 Aa ----- Iraqi Delegation Holds Talks on Security 09-10 5:18p

BC-Turkey-Iraq

Iraqi Delegation Holds Talks on Security Zone in Ankara

AP Photo Available

By SELCAN HACAOGU

Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - An Iraqi delegation, led by an adviser to President Saddam Hussein, met with Turkish officials Tuesday to express opposition to a buffer zone established by the Turkish military along its border with northern Iraq.

"We came to Ankara to explain to the Turkish government, the Iraqi view regarding the military action plan by Turkey," Hamed Josef Humadi told reporters upon arrival.

Humadi is holding talks with deputy Foreign Minister Onur Oymen and Gen. Vural Avar of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

While opposing a buffer zone as a threat to its sovereignty, Baghdad has offered to cooperate with Turkey to prevent Kurdish rebels from infiltrating into Turkey.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, have been waging a war for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

Turkey and Iraq used to have a "hot pursuit agreement" that allowed Turkish troops to enter northern Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish rebels, which Turkey did several times before the Gulf War.

In Tuesday's operations, troops killed 23 Kurdish rebels in the southeastern provinces of Sirnak and Hakkari, bordering Iraq, the Anatolia news agency said. Two soldiers were also killed in the clashes.

Last year, Turkey dispatched 35,000 soldiers into northern Iraq in an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the rebels.

The Iraqi delegation flew to Ankara from the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir after traveling across northern Iraq. It was only the second time since the Gulf War that officials from Baghdad traveled across the Kurdish-dominated area.

A previous Iraqi delegation used the same route when the Iraqi Kurdish group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, now allied with Baghdad, allowed them to cross to hold talks with Turkish officials in March about a joint oil pipeline.

The oil pipeline, running from Kirkuk oil fields in northern Iraq to a Mediterranean Turkish oil terminal, was scheduled to be reopened this month but the United Nations postponed that after Baghdad sent its forces into northern Iraq after the KDP asked for its military support against a rival Kurdish group last month.

(sh)

101419 Sep GMT

[Kurdish]

APW VVV57 Aa ----- Saddam Offers Amnesty in Bid to Keep Ku 09-10 8:36p

HC-Iraq-Kurds, 4th Ld-Writethru,0675

Saddam Offers Amnesty in Bid to Keep Kurds at Home

EDs: LEADS throughout to UPDATE with additional details on amnesty, deletes outdated material. No pickup.

With AP Photos

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq (AP) - Seeking shelter in the rugged mountains bordering Iran, tens of thousands of Kurds fled Sulaymaniyah while President Saddam Hussein's Kurdish allies paraded through the streets in celebration Tuesday.

Up to 300,000 Kurds may have left the northeastern city, U.N. officials said, evoking memories of a mass exodus of Kurds to neighboring countries after a failed uprising against Saddam in 1991.

The Iraqi president sought to keep the frightened refugees at home, declaring a general amnesty for all Kurds and lifting barriers between Iraq and the semi-autonomous Kurdish areas that have been in place since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

The full effects of the announcement were not immediately clear. But the Kurdish "safe haven" established by the U.S.-led forces five years ago has effectively collapsed, and Saddam was wasting no time in reasserting his authority over the north.

Many Kurds showed little faith in Saddam after so many harsh crackdowns against them in the past.

The tide of refugees in the northeast swelled swiftly, though the remaining residents in Sulaymaniyah said the U.N. figures may have been too high.

Many people were hiding in homes or only went to the outskirts of the city and were likely to return if there was no fighting, they said.

The city was calm Tuesday except for an impromptu parade by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which celebrated its sweeping victory in northern Iraq.

KDP soldiers waved their yellow flags and shouted victory slogans through loudspeakers as they marched through the streets.

A group of 10 men carried a 10-foot-high (3-meter-high) picture of KDP leader Massoud Barzani to the headquarters of the vanquished Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Children followed behind with makeshift banners of their own. Most shops were closed and there was a holiday air in the city.

The KDP on Monday night rolled into Sulaymaniyah, the last stronghold in northern Iraq of the rebel PUK.

In Baghdad, Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf announced the amnesty on state television, saying the only people excluded were those who committed murder, rape or stole state property.

The statement did not give details on the new rules that would apply to the northern Kurdish region.

But it appears that Iraq will no longer regard the north as a separate region, and people will be able to travel and trade freely without obtaining any special documents.

In neighboring Iran, the government said 200,000 refugees were massed at its border and it gave conflicting signals about whether they would be allowed in.

Ahmad Hosseini, an Interior Ministry official in Tehran, told a news conference that the refugees would be kept out "unless their lives are threatened by gunfire or attacks."

But Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Mohammadi said Iran was "ready to accept the refugees."

Some 2,000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees, traveling on foot and crammed onto vehicles, crossed into Iran on Monday, according to the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

In Geneva, Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the U.N. refugee agency, said 75,000 refugees had reached or were on their way to the Iraqi border town of Panjwin. Some of those fleeing threw stones at U.N. vehicles in apparent frustration.

The Iraqi army and the Kurdistan Democratic Party teamed up on Aug. 31 to capture Irbil, the de facto Kurdish capital in the north.

U.S. missile strikes against southern Iraq last week seemed to deter the Iraqi army from taking part in further fighting. But with Iraqi forces marching right behind the KDP, the faction easily defeated its Kurdish rival.

RMW3836-----

u i BC-Turkey-Iraq 1stLd 09-10 0193

ank rom intw 233 87 nic

^BC-Turkey-Iraq, 1st Ld<

^Iraqi Delegation Holds Talks on Security Zone in Ankara<

^Eds: LEADS with Turkish determination to maintain buffer zone, ADDS
quotes by Ciller<

^AP Photo Available<

^By SELCAN HACAOGLU=

^Associated Press Writer= retract

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey on Tuesday said it would not
backtrack from a buffer zone established along its border with
northern Iraq to keep out rebel Kurds, despite opposition from
Baghdad.

An Iraqi delegation met with Turkish officials Tuesday to expres
dissatisfaction with the zone, aimed at preventing rebel
infiltration from northern Iraq.

"We have conveyed (to Baghdad) our determination to maintain a
security zone," Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller told reporters after
her meeting with Hamed Yosef Humadi, adviser to President Saddam
Hussein.

"Turkey's initiative goes no further than wanting to protect its
borders and people," Mrs. Ciller said.

Turkey declared a zone as wide as 20 kilometres (12 miles) in
some places along the mountainous border to guard against attacks by
Kurdish rebels operating in Iraq.

While opposing 4th graf pvs<

(sf/djw)

AP-LD-09-10-96 1906GMT<

ank 233 87 intw nic

^BC-Turkey-US-Iraqi Refugees<

^US to Give Refuge to Iraqi Kurds Who Worked for US Agencies<

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) _ Negotiations were underway between U.S. and Turkish officials to let Iraqi Kurds who worked for U.S. agencies travel to the United States as refugees, sources said here Tuesday.

The group, of about 2,500, consists of employees and their immediate families who worked for the U.S.-led allied force that patrolled Northern Iraq or for a U.S. aid agency until the latest turmoil in the region forced them to flee.

Turkish newspapers on Wednesday referred to the negotiations but gave no details. Officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the talks were taking place.

The daily Milliyet said most of the evacuees worked for CIA to try to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

U.S. President Clinton has said that the United States was trying to help anyone who needed to escape the fighting in northern Iraq. But he did not elaborate.

"There are requests from people in northern Iraq to go to third countries including the United States through Turkey," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Omer Akbel told reporters Wednesday.

"We review such requests solely on humanitarian basis," he said. He would not elaborate further.

Most of the Iraqi Kurds who waited for a refugee status in the United States worked for the MCC and U.S. government-run Office of Federation Disasters Agency, officials said.

"They worked as guards, drivers, cooks, cleaners," a British diplomat told The Associated Press.

The U.S.-led allied coalition force withdrew its military coordination center (MCC) from the northern Iraqi town of Zakho after Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) allied itself with Baghdad in fighting to chase a rival Iraqi Kurdish group from the region.

Most of the official and private western aid agencies which worked under MCC supervision also left northern Iraq last week.

The Iraqi Kurdish refugees were expected to cross the border into Turkey in the next couple of days.

The refugees gathered at places between the towns of Zakho and Dohuk near the Turkish border awaiting for their evacuation.

According to the sources, Turkish government wants the evacuation of the refugees to be handled in small groups because of security concerns. They would stay in Turkey as briefly as possible.

Turkey remains concerned that Turkish Kurdish guerrillas operating from northern Iraq will increase their attacks against Turkey after the latest turmoil in northern Iraq and apparently is worried that rebels, who are fighting for autonomy in Turkey's southeast, could somehow infiltrate into the refugee group.

Safeen Dizayhe, the KDP representative here, said his group knew about the evacuation plans. But he disputed the figure, saying he thought at maximum 100 people worked for the United States or the allied force.

(dr-fd)

AP-LD-09-11-96 1017GMT<

RME6890-----

u i BC-Turkey-Iraq-Buffer 09-11 0301

ank 233 87 intw nic

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Buffer<

^Turkey Rejects Iraqi Protests Over Buffer Zone<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey on Wednesday rejected Iraqi protest over Ankara's plans to establish a buffer zone extending 20 kilometers (12 miles) into northern Iraq to keep out Turkish Kurdish rebels.

"Turkey does not need approval from anyone to preserve its security," said foreign ministry spokesman Omer Akbel.

An Iraqi delegation led by Hamed Yosef Humadi, adviser to President Saddam Hussein, arrived Tuesday to relay Iraq's unhappiness over the plan, which is aimed at preventing Turkish Kurdish rebels from staging hit-and-run attacks against Turkish targets from their bases in northern Iraq.

"Turkey will take every necessary security measure in that zone," Akbel insisted.

After meeting with Humadi on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said that "Turkey's initiative goes no further than wanting to protect its borders and people."

Humadi refused to comment on the Iraqi-Turkish discussions, which continued on Wednesday.

Turkey declared a zone as wide as 20 kilometers (12 miles) in some places along the mountainous border to guard against attacks by Kurdish rebels operating in Iraq.

Iraq, calling the buffer zone a threat to its sovereignty, has offered to cooperate with Turkey to prevent Kurdish rebels from infiltrating into Turkey.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, have been waging a war for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

Baghdad in the past allowed Turkish troops to enter northern Iraq in pursuit of Turkish Kurdish rebels.

Last year, Turkey deployed 35,000 soldiers in northern Iraq in an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the rebels.

(sh-sf-fd)

AP-LD-09-11-96 1342GMT<

RME6879-----

u i BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missil

09-11 0079

ank 233 87 intw nic nyapj

^BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missile Attack<

^URGENT<

^Iraq Fires Two Missiles at US Jets; Miss<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Iraq fired two missiles at a pair of U.S. F-16s patrolling over northern Iraq Wednesday, a U.S. officer from the U.S.-European Command said. The U.S. jets were not hit.

''Both missiles missed, the planes returned safely,'' U.S. Maj. Lewis Boon of the U.S.-European Command based in Frankfurt, told The Associated Press.

MORE

AP-LD-09-11-96 1244GMT<

RME6880-----

u i BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missil 1stAdd 09-11 0078

ank 233 87 intw nic nyapj

^BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missile Attack, 1st Add<

^URGENT<

^ANKARA: Associated Press.<

The missiles were launched from an unknown position on the ground at 7:50 a.m. (0450 GMT), Boon said.

“The F-16s did not respond to the attack because their radars were switched off,” Boon said.

A U.S.-led allied air force, based in southern Turkey, has been protecting Iraqi Kurds from forces of Saddam Hussein since the Gulf War.

(sh-fd)

AP-LD-09-11-96 1252GMT<

RME6883-----

u i BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missil 1stLd-Writethru 09-11 0204
ank 233 87 intw nic nyapj

^BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missile Attack, 1st Ld-Writethru<

^URGENT<

^Iraq Fires Two Missiles at US Jets; Miss<

^EDS: COMBINES urgent series, adds background on use of Turkish base
for no-fly zone patrols; CLARIFIES Boon in Stuttgart suburb<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Iraq fired two missiles at a pair of U.S.
F-16s patrolling over northern Iraq Wednesday, a U.S. officer from
the U.S.-European Command said. The U.S. jets were not hit.

''Both missiles missed; the planes returned safely,'' said U.S.
Maj. Lewis Boon of the U.S.-European Command based near Stuttgart,
some 230 kilometers (140 miles) southeast of Frankfurt.

The missiles were launched from an unknown position on the ground
at 7:50 a.m. (0450 GMT), Boon told The Associated Press.

''The F-16s did not respond to the attack because their radars
were switched off,'' Boon said.

A U.S.-led allied air force, based in southern Turkey, has been
protecting Iraqi Kurds from forces of Saddam Hussein since the Gulf
War.

Some 50 fighter jets and bombers from Britain, France and the
United States used a southern Turkish airbase in Incirlik for
patrols of the no-fly zone above the 36th parallel in northern Iraq.

(sh-sf-fd)

AP-LD-09-11-96 1303GMT<

u i BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missil 2ndLd-Writethru 09-11 0510

ank 233 87 intw

^BC-Turkey-US-Iraq-Missile Attack, 2nd Ld-Writethru<

^Iraq Fires Two Missiles at US Jets; Miss<

^EDS: UPDATES with patrol flights continuing from Incirlik; incident in southern Iraq, INCORPORATES Pentagon comments<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Iraq fired two missiles at a pair of U.S. F-16s patrolling over northern Iraq Wednesday, the U.S. military said. Neither jet was hit.

“Both missiles missed; the planes returned safely,” said U.S. Maj. Lewis Boon of the U.S.-European Command based near Stuttgart, some 230 kilometers (140 miles) southeast of Frankfurt.

The missiles, SA-6s, were launched from an unknown position on the ground at 7:50 a.m. (0450 GMT), Boon told The Associated Press.

“The F-16s did not respond to the attack because, their (Iraqi) radars were switched off,” Boon said.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Navy Lt. Crd. Scott Campbell said the Iraqi radars tracking the aircraft were not kept on long enough for the F-16s to fire retaliatory radar-seeking missiles. The Air Force then dispatched F-15E Strike Eagle fighters to attempt to locate the missile launch site. They were unsuccessful.

The American war planes saw the first missile launched, Campbell said, and the second surface-to-air missile was launched moments later.

The Pentagon had no immediate comment on whether any U.S. retaliation was planned.

In a separate incident, two Iraqi aircraft violated the no-fly zone in the southern half of the country.

“I’m sure we’re monitoring the whole area very closely,” Campbell said.

The “no-fly” zone in southern Iraq was expanded to the 33rd parallel and to Baghdad’s southern suburbs on orders of President Clinton after U.S. missiles were fired at Iraqi tanks in response to Saddam Hussein’s ground offensive against Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

The Pentagon had no immediate comment on whether any U.S. retaliation was planned.

A U.S.-led allied air force, based at Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey, has been protecting Iraqi Kurds from forces of Saddam Hussein since the Gulf War.

Some 50 fighter jets and bombers from Britain, France and the United States use Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey to stage their patrols of the no-fly zone above the 36th parallel in northern Iraq.

“It is a regular fly day, the flights are continuing as planned,” Sgt. Carl Norman, an Incirlik spokesman said after the report of the missile firing at the U.S. F-16s.

“It is not just U.S. planes that fly out of Incirlik, it is varied, any of the nations could be flying,” Norman said.

Turkish officials were not available for comment on the Iraqi missile attack.

An Iraqi delegation was in Ankara on Wednesday to push Baghdad’s protests over Ankara’s plans to establish a buffer zone extending 20 kilometers (12 miles) into northern Iraq to keep out Turkish Kurdish rebels.

Ankara wants the zone to try to prevent Turkish Kurdish rebels from staging hit-and-run attacks against Turkish targets from their bases in northern Iraq.

(sh-sf-fd)

AP-LD-09-11-96 1422GMT<

w0139-----

r i BC-UN-Iraq-US 09-11 0371

02 04-u 08 23 87 uni wrpti nyc nic ank

^BC-UN-Iraq-US,0377<

^Iraq Complains About Clinton Promise To Help Iraqis Escape Fighting<

^By ROBERT H. REID=

^Associated Press Writer=

UNITED NATIONS (AP) _ Iraq has complained to the United Nations about President Clinton's offer to help Iraqis escape fighting in northern Iraq and warns it will take "all steps it deems necessary" to defend its territory from U.S. "aggression."

In letters Tuesday to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the Security Council, Iraq complained that Clinton was illegally interfering in Iraqi internal affairs.

U.N. sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the letters were received late Tuesday, but they refused to release the text.

On Monday, Clinton said the United States was trying to help anyone who needs to escape the fighting in northern Iraq, but "our ability to control internal events in Iraq is limited."

Other U.S. officials said only Western government and relief officials were being evacuated from northern Iraq. Ethnic Kurds have raised fears of severe Iraqi reprisals against anyone suspected of sympathizing with the United States.

In a separate complaint, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Sahaf said Turkey's plan to establish a buffer zone into northern Iraq constituted "acts of aggression...openly supported by the United States of America."

Al-Sahaf accused the United States of encouraging the Turks to take steps which challenge Iraqi sovereignty and independence.

"The Iraqi government reserves the right to take any steps it deems necessary to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty and to ensure the safety of its people in the face of the policy of aggression pursued by the United States," he said in a letter to the council Tuesday.

Turkey said the buffer zone was designed to prevent hit-and-run attacks against Turkish targets by Turkish Kurds operating from bases inside northern Iraq.

Iraq has offered to cooperate with Turkey to prevent Kurdish rebels from infiltrating into Turkey.

The Kurdistan Workers Party has been waging a war for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

AP-LD-09-11-96 1518GMT<

233 87 ank

^BC-US-Iraq-Diplomatic,0575<

^U.S. Urges Turkey to Act Quickly on Hard-Pressed Kurdish Refugees<

^With US-Iraq, Iraq-Kurds<

^Eds: Recaps previous with new material.<

^By BARRY SCHWEID=

^AP Diplomatic Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) — Turkey has agreed to allow Iraqi Kurds associated with U.S. humanitarian efforts to enter Turkey on a temporary basis, U.S. officials said.

They said Wednesday the Kurds would have to be screened at the border by U.S. officials to confirm their link to the U.S. humanitarian effort in northern Iraq. One official said Wednesday night that the United States is optimistic, but no refugees have moved across the border yet.

"We have a moral obligation," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said earlier in the day in calling for a immediate action from Turkey to help the Kurds escape the wrath of Saddam Hussein's "security goons."

Burns portrayed the refugees as political targets, hinting some of them may qualify for sanctuary in the United States if Turkey gave them temporary haven.

An official who spoke on condition of anonymity said it was expected that all of the Kurds given safe haven in Turkey would be declared political refugees and allowed to resettle in the United States. Another official said alternative options were being considered, but didn't say what they were.

The Iraqi assault on northern Iraq last week reportedly undermined a covert U.S. operation aimed at overthrowing Saddam. The Americans involved are said to have fled. On Monday, Burns confirmed all American officials had left Iraq.

But among the 50,000 to 100,000 refugees that international relief organizations estimate are in flight are about 2,500 Kurds and their families who worked for the U.S.-led allied force that patrolled northern Iraq or for a U.S. aid agency.

Negotiations with Turkey to secure temporary refuge have moved slowly. "We need to complete this operation quickly and protect these people," Burns said.

The refugees are not just people suffering deprivation, the U.S. official said. "We cannot be at all sure their lives will be protected against the security goons of Saddam Hussein," he said.

If Iraq rebuilds its air defenses or menaces allied planes patrolling the skies over northern and southern Iraq, "we reserve the right to take any military action we wish," Burns said.

In Ankara, Turkish officials said little about the negotiations with the United States. "There are requests from people in northern Iraq to go to third countries, including the United States through Turkey," Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel told reporters Wednesday.

"We review such requests solely on humanitarian basis," he said.

Tens of thousands of Kurdish refugees, meanwhile, were trying to flee to Iran, but many have turned back, lured by Iraqi promises they will be treated well if they remained in the north.

"Our advice to all citizens of Iraq is to be very skeptical about a man who has never kept his word," Burns said.

He appealed to all neighboring countries to take in refugees, describing the situation as "very chaotic, very complex, very difficult."

Turkey has felt the sting of radical Kurdish guerrillas who have conducted terrorist operations against Turkish officials. The negotiations are shadowed by concern these attacks may be resumed.

AP-LD-09-12-96 0238GMT<

u i BC-Turkey-Iraq-Buffer 1stLd-Writethru 09-11 0467

ank rom 233 87 nic intw

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Buffer, 1st Ld-Writethru<

^Turkey Rejects Iraqi Protests Over Buffer Zone<

^Eds: UPDATES with Ciller remarks on buffer zone and Turkomans in northern Iraq, Tunisian reaction<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey on Wednesday rejected Iraqi protest over Ankara's plans to establish a buffer zone extending 20 kilometers (12 miles) into northern Iraq to keep out Turkish Kurdish rebels.

"Turkey needs to secure its borders. Necessary measures will be taken," Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller told reporters.

Mrs. Ciller spoke after meeting for a second time since Tuesday with Hamed Yosef Humadi, adviser to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Humadi arrived here to relay Iraq's unhappiness over the plan, which is aimed at preventing Turkish Kurdish rebels from staging hit-and-run attacks against Turkish targets from their bases in northern Iraq.

"We have expressed our determination very clearly," Mrs. Ciller said.

"I can say that we now understand each others' problems better."

Humadi refused to comment on the Iraqi-Turkish discussions.

After her meeting with Humadi on Tuesday, Mrs. Ciller said that "Turkey's initiative goes no further than wanting to protect its borders and people."

On Wednesday, Tunisia said it was "preoccupied" with Turkey's decision to establish a security zone at its border with Iraq.

Such a zone constitutes "interference in Iraq's interior affairs," the Tunisian Foreign Ministry said in a statement reaffirming its support for Baghdad's territorial rights.

Iraq, calling the buffer zone a threat to its sovereignty, has offered to cooperate with Turkey to prevent Kurdish rebels from infiltrating into Turkey.

Turkey declared a zone as wide as 20 kilometers (12 miles) in some places along the mountainous border to guard against attacks by Kurdish rebels operating in Iraq.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, have been waging a war for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

Last year, Turkey deployed 35,000 soldiers in northern Iraq in an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the rebels.

Meanwhile Mrs. Ciller expressed satisfaction with a statement by Massoud Barzani, leader of an Iraqi Kurdish group now allied with Baghdad, that he would watch over Iraqi Turkomans' rights.

Turkey grew concerned about the safety of Turkomans in the region after Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party gained control of most of northern Iraq from a rival Kurdish group with the help of the Baghdad regime this month.

Some 250,000 Turkomans of Turkish origin live in northern Iraq north of the 36th parallel where the U.S.-led allied air force has maintained security since the end of the Gulf War.

(sh/djw)

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^BC-US-Iraq-Diplomatic

^U.S. Urges Turkey To Act Quickly on Hard-Pressed Kurdish Refugees<

^With US-Iraq; Iran-Iraq<

^By BARRY SCHWEID=

^AP Diplomatic Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States urged Turkey to move quickly Wednesday to let Iraqi Kurds who worked for U.S. agencies into the country so they could escape the wrath of Saddam Hussein's "security goons."

"We have a moral obligation," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said in calling for a immediate action.

Burns portrayed the refugees as political targets, thereby hinting some of them may qualify for sanctuary in the United States if Turkey gave them temporary haven.

The Iraqi assault on northern Iraq last week reportedly undermined a covert U.S. operation aimed at overthrowing Saddam. The Americans involved are said to have fled. On Monday, Burns confirmed all American officials had left Iraq.

But among the 50,000 to 100,000 refugees that international relief organizations estimate are in flight are about 2,500 Kurds and their families who worked for the U.S.-led allied force that patrolled northern Iraq or for a U.S. aid agency.

Negotiations with Turkey to secure temporary refuge have moved slowly. "We need to complete this operation quickly and protect these people," Burns said.

The refugees are not just people suffering deprivation, the U.S. official said. "We cannot be at all sure their lives will be protected against the security goons of Saddam Hussein," he said.

If Iraq rebuilds its air defenses or menaces allied planes patrolling the skies over northern and southern Iraq, "we reserve the right to take any military action we wish," Burns said.

In Ankara, Turkish officials said little about the negotiations with the United States. "There are requests from people in northern Iraq to go to third countries, including the United States through Turkey," Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel told reporters Wednesday.

"We review such requests solely on humanitarian basis," he said.

Turkey has felt the sting of radical Kurdish guerrillas who also have fought for independence from Ankara. The negotiations are shadowed by concern these attacks may be resumed.

Burns also called on Iran to open its borders and provide humanitarian relief to all refugees from Iraq. Iran's official radio said Wednesday that tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurds had entered the country and aid workers were struggling to provide food, water and medical care.

Among the Kurdish refugees fleeing to Iran, many were reported to have turned back, lured by Iraqi promises they will be treated well if they remained in the north.

"Our advice to all citizens of Iraq is to be very skeptical about a man who has never kept his word," Burns said.

AP-LD-09-11-96 2117GMT<

[Kurdish]

APW VVV59 Aa ----- U.S. Tries To Debunk Notion of Iraqi Tr 09-11 8:31a

BC-US-Iraq,0709

U.S. Tries To Debunk Notion of Iraqi Triumph in Latest
Confrontation

By GEORGE GEDDA

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Iraq may be able to project its power into the northern Kurdish territories but its oil-rich neighbors can still feel safe from Iraqi attack because Saddam Hussein lacks an effective air force.

That is the essence of the administration's response to critics who maintain that in the recent flurry involving the Iraqi army and U.S. missiles, Iraq has the edge.

As the debate over the winners and losers persisted Tuesday, administration officials injected a new element by disclosing that Iraq has begun rebuilding air defense installations despite U.S. warnings that such activity invites further attacks.

New radar units have been attached to the surface-to-air missiles and the systems may again be able to threaten U.S. aircraft, a defense official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Asked Tuesday whether Saddam's rebuilding could lead to more U.S. strikes, President Clinton said: "We will evaluate them on what they do, not what they say."

The Clinton administration warned that the United States will assert a right to protect its ability to keep Saddam's air force grounded. Anything Saddam tries will be detected, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said. "We have perfect vision," he said, adding that having to endure no-flight zones in the north and south must be "incredibly humiliating" for Saddam.

Still, it was difficult to minimize the extent of Saddam's triumph in the north. His Kurdish allies flaunted their new authority over their latest conquest, the northeastern city of Sulaymaniyah, looting the headquarters of their vanquished rivals.

The Kurdish region had been off-limits to Iraqi forces for five years, but Saddam now seems firmly entrenched there again. He declared a general amnesty for all Kurds, provoking ridicule from Washington.

Burns said the offer would be "laughable and almost comical" if it weren't so tragic.

Advising the Kurds to pay Saddam no heed, Burns said, "It would be naive in the extreme to believe that Saddam Hussein cares in the least about the welfare of the Iraqi Kurds."

While acknowledging that Saddam has been able to take advantage of divisions among the fractious Kurds, Burns exhorted reporters not to forget that the Kurdish region holds minimal strategic importance.

"Our primary strategic interests are in the south because our allies are in the south," Burns said. "Our partners in the Gulf are in the south; Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and the other Gulf states. And we will protect them from Saddam Hussein, as we did back in 1990 and '91."

Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole suggested the administration may be overselling the impact of its military action, making claims of success it cannot substantiate.

He wasn't the only one.

"At first blush it appeared to be a great American victory, but on second thought it doesn't seem very impressive at all," University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato said. "To the contrary, it's looking more and more like Saddam Hussein won. But I don't think that view has penetrated to the broad body of voters."

But Brookings Institution think tank analyst Thomas Mann said Clinton has been acting under restraints not of his own making. "People have already internalized and discounted the fact we left Iraq back in 1991 before the job was done and now our tools are limited," said Mann.

Burns said that to the extent Saddam has expanded his control into Kurdish territory, the Kurds themselves are to blame.

"We gave the Kurds every opportunity for five years," said Burns. "We gave them political protection, we gave them economic and humanitarian assistance, we gave them a security zone in the north where they could run their own affairs in a highly autonomous way."

Iraq claimed again Tuesday that it fired on allied warplanes patrolling the southern no-fly zone, although no hits were reported. A Defense Department spokesman, Lt. Col. Ed Veiga, said, "We've had no such reports."

SC-US-Iraq, 2nd Ld-Writethru

U.S. Prepares in Event of Another Round of Confrontation with Iraq

Eds: Combines pvs; trims

With Turkey-US-Iraq-Missile Attack

By SUSANNE M. SCHAFER

AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The United States has begun moving additional warplanes into the Persian Gulf in the event of another confrontation with Saddam Hussein, Pentagon officials said Wednesday.

A pair of B-52s left their base in Guam with headed for the island of Diego Garcia in the Arabian Sea near the Persian Gulf, the officials said.

"The Air Force has received permission to base the B-52s on Diego," said a sources who spoke on condition of anonymity. Two B-52s took part in the last round of cruise missile attacks against Iraq.

The action comes in the wake of a pair of provocations from the Iraqi leader's military forces, including the firing of two missiles at a pair of U.S. F-16s patrolling over northern Iraq Wednesday.

Other possible military responses are under consideration, including the placement of a second aircraft carrier and F-117 bombers in the region, military sources said.

A senior Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Wednesday that Saddam appears to be misreading U.S. resolve in the matter.

"I think he's made the miscalculation that we won't act because of the elections," the official said. "He miscalculates all the time."

The military officials also said that besides firing two missiles at U.S. aircraft, an Iraqi MiG-25 jet flew toward the no-fly zone in the south, but did not penetrate it. That is a typical type of testing action taken by the Iraqi pilots, the military officials said.

Following the failed attempt to send missiles towards the U.S. aircraft in the northern zone, two U.S. F-15Es attempted to try to find the missile sites, but they were unable to do so, a third military official said.

The Iraqis apparently turned the radar on, fired the missiles and then shut the radar down within seconds, the official said.

"The radars weren't on long enough for the U.S. aircraft to return fire," the official said.

In a continuing debate over the winners and losers in the U.S.-Iraq confrontation, administration officials on Tuesday injected a new element by disclosing that Iraq has begun rebuilding air defense installations despite U.S. warnings that such activity invites further attacks.

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Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole has suggested the administration may be overselling the impact of its military action, making claims of success it cannot substantiate.

[Turkey]

APW VVV61 Aa ----- Iraq Complains About Clinton Promise To 09-11 6:16p

BC-UN-Iraq-US,0377

Iraq Complains About Clinton Promise To Help Iraqis Escape Fighting

By ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - Iraq has complained to the United Nations about President Clinton's offer to help Iraqis escape fighting in northern Iraq and warns it will take "all steps it deems necessary" to defend its territory from U.S. "aggression."

In letters Tuesday to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the Security Council, Iraq complained that Clinton was illegally interfering in Iraqi internal affairs.

U.N. sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the letters were received late Tuesday, but they refused to release the text.

On Monday, Clinton said the United States was trying to help anyone who needs to escape the fighting in northern Iraq, but "our ability to control internal events in Iraq is limited."

Other U.S. officials said only Western government and relief officials were being evacuated from northern Iraq. Ethnic Kurds have raised fears of severe Iraqi reprisals against anyone suspected of sympathizing with the United States.

In a separate complaint, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Sahaf said Turkey's plan to establish a buffer zone into northern Iraq constituted "acts of aggression...openly supported by the United States of America."

Al-Sahaf accused the United States of encouraging the Turks to take steps which challenge Iraqi sovereignty and independence.

"The Iraqi government reserves the right to take any steps it deems necessary to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty and to ensure the safety of its people in the face of the policy of aggression pursued by the United States," he said in a letter to the council Tuesday.

Turkey said the buffer zone was designed to prevent hit-and-run attacks against Turkish targets by Turkish Kurds operating from bases inside northern Iraq.

Iraq has offered to cooperate with Turkey to prevent Kurdish rebels from infiltrating into Turkey.

The Kurdistan Workers Party has been waging a war for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

111518 Sep GMT

[Tashkent]

APW VUV62 Aa ----- Iraqi Fires at U.S. Planes, Americans P 09-11 8:48p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld-Writethru,0740

Iraqi Fires at U.S. Planes, Americans Plan Response

Eds: UPDATES with Pentagon saying only one missile fired at U.S. planes, additional U.S. comments.

AP Photos SUL101-102,104, ANK102-103,105

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq (AP) - Emboldened by triumphs on the ground, Saddam Hussein set his sights on the skies Wednesday as his army fired at least one missile at U.S. F-16 jets patrolling the "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq.

There were no hits, but the Americans promptly announced they were sending additional warplanes into the volatile region for another potential showdown with the Iraqi leader.

Saddam vowed he would no longer honor the "damned imaginary" no-fly zones after the Americans blasted air defense sites in southern Iraq last week.

"Our air defenses intercepted the enemy targets with anti-aircraft guns and rockets and forced them to flee," the official Iraqi News Agency said.

Iraq has reported similar actions for five of the past six days, but Wednesday was the first time the Americans confirmed coming under fire. Initial reports said two Iraqi missiles were fired. But a Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity, later said only one missile was set off.

In the past two weeks, Saddam has undertaken his biggest military adventure since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

He sent his troops into northern Iraq on Aug. 31 to help Kurdish allies seize the Kurdish "safe haven." He has defied limited U.S. attempts to stop him, and he now appears willing to provoke a new confrontation.

"We reserve the right to take action to protect our pilots who are enforcing the no-fly zones both over northern Iraq and southern Iraq," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry. "It doesn't matter whether he (Saddam) observes them or not. We enforce them."

The Iraqi fired at two F-16s, the Pentagon said. In response, Pentagon officials said the United States was moving two B-52s from their base in Guam to the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

A U.S.-led allied air force, based in southern Turkey, has been protecting Iraqi Kurds from Saddam's forces since the 1991 Gulf War. Fifty fighter jets and bombers from Britain, France and the United States patrol the no-fly zone above the 36th parallel in northern Iraq.

Meanwhile, Saddam has attempted to reassert his authority over northern Iraq, which had been semi-autonomous since the safe haven was established five years ago.

Seeking to prevent an exodus of Kurdish refugees, Saddam has declared a general amnesty for all Kurds and lifted travel and trade barriers between Iraq and the Kurdish area.

The U.N. refugee agency said in Sulaymaniyah that 50,000 people had fled the town, drastically lowering Tuesday's estimates of 300,000. About half of them have returned home, said an official speaking on condition of anonymity.

About 5,000 Iraqis have crossed the Bashmaq border post into Iran, border guards said, and several thousand more were believed to have crossed elsewhere.

Iran's official Tehran radio said that "tens of thousands" of Iraqi Kurds had entered Iran and that aid workers were struggling to provide food, water and medical care for them in temporary camps along the border.

"Half our family is here, half is there," said Miriam Hussein, a mother of seven children. "I sent two of my daughters this morning to the Iranian side to find my two sons who had fled. But none have returned. Now I have four children over there."

On the Iraqi side, a U.N. team was mobbed by refugees when it went to investigate the scene at the border. Refugees surrounded the U.N. vehicle and wouldn't let the officials leave for almost two hours, said one U.N. official speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Kurds fleeing into Iran included Jalal Talabani and other commanders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the losers in the recent fighting in northern Iraq, said border guards speaking on condition of anonymity.

At the United Nations, Iraq complained about President Clinton's offer to help Iraqis escape from northern Iraq and warned it will take "all steps it deems necessary" to defend its territory from what it called aggression and illegal interference in its internal affairs.

BC-Kurds-Future, 0551

With Iraq-Kurds

Kurds Worried About Loss of Autonomy, Future With Saddam

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

HALABJAH, Iraq (AP) - In this town that Saddam Hussein tried to wipe out with poison gas, Kurdish residents fear their brief taste of autonomy is over and they'll once again be at the mercy of the Iraqi leader.

Many said they were happy that the infighting between rival Kurdish factions was over.

But peace came with a price: The semi-autonomous Kurdish zone in northern Iraq has collapsed and there's no prospect of moving toward an independent state of Kurdistan. Saddam, meanwhile, has moved swiftly to re-establish his authority.

"The closer we become with Saddam, the farther we go from Kurdistan and being Kurds," said Aziz Mahwoud, a cigarette vendor in Halabjah. "We don't want to just be another part of Iraq. We have spilled Kurdish blood to become Kurdistan."

Halabjah is a small, impoverished town of perhaps 8,000 people near the border with Iran.

It achieved international notoriety in 1988 when Saddam's army used poison gas on Halabjah as part of a scorched-earth campaign against the Kurds. More than 4,000 men, women and children were killed. For good measure, the town was also bombed.

"I don't even like to say his name. It's a dirty name to me," Akrem Mohammed, owner of a small grocery store, said of the Iraqi leader.

His shop is just across from the rubble of homes that have never been rebuilt since the assault eight years ago.

Massoud Barzani, leader of the victorious Kurdistan Democratic Party, is a long-time opponent of Saddam. But he aligned with him to wipe out his Kurdish rival, and already there is talk of a political deal.

Few in Halabjah think the Kurds will get a fair shake.

"I think any deal with him (Saddam) could turn against the Kurds," Mohammed said.

A young car mechanic who said his father died in the gas attack vowed to take up arms if Saddam's forces re-enter northern Iraq.

"If I have to die, it's OK. It's better than being under Saddam," said Omar Ali, holding his oil-blackened hands as if he were shooting a rifle.

Across the street from his garage is a bronze statue erected as a memorial to the attack. It depicts the body of a mother with her arm draped over her dead baby, his mouth open after gasping his last.

While Saddam has few fans here, some Kurds feel their economic conditions could improve under Saddam's plan to lift travel and trade restrictions between the Kurdish areas and the rest of Iraq.

For the past five years, travelers and traders were required to have special permission to go in and out of the safe haven.

"I'm a trader. I want all roads to be open. That will make our business better," said Maruyen Mawrut, a jewelry store owner. "People will come up from Kirkuk, Mosul, Baghdad to buy things here."

Miriam Hamamin said her 4-year-old child died in the 1988 gas attack and she spent 50 days recovering. But conditions are so bad in Halabjah, she was willing to give Saddam one more chance.

"Of course I hate Saddam. But if he can bring a better life for the Kurds, then I think we should welcome him," she said.

[Syrian]

APW VVV60 Aa ----- 5,000 Refugees, Kurdish Rebels, Enter I 09-11 2:24p

BC-Iran-Iraq, 1st Ld-Writethru, 0579

5,000 Refugees, Kurdish Rebels, Enter Iran

Eds: INSERTS new grafs 2-3 to UPDATE with Tehran radio saying tens of thousands of refugees in Iran, new grafs 6-7 with witnesses reporting shooting by KDP forces.

With Iraq-Kurds

By AFSHIN VALINEJAD

Associated Press Writer

BASHMAQ, Iran (AP) - About 5,000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees, including a rebel leader, have entered Iran through this border post after a faction allied with Saddam Hussein seized control of northern Iraq, border guards said Wednesday.

Official Tehran radio said tens of thousands of others had been trickling in since Tuesday and were housed in temporary camps in several border provinces. The report said as many as 30,000 were staying in camps in Western Azerbaijan province.

"Iranian aid workers are struggling to provide food, water and medical care for the refugees," the radio said.

Looking tired and disheveled, the refugees in Bashmaq spent the chilly night in a barren field near the border, sleeping in cars or tents. They arrived with whatever they could carry or pile into a vehicle, and they had little food or water.

Many said they wouldn't return home because they didn't trust Saddam or the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which has taken control of the north.

Some of the refugees in Bashmaq said they had been chased by KDP forces up to the border. Refugees and border guards said KDP forces opened fire at refugees queued up at the border Tuesday, killing and wounding an unspecified number.

"I don't know where to look. I can't stay here and I won't return home because I don't trust the KDP," said a tearful Mansour Amir, 12, who had come to look for his father, a rebel commander he believed had escaped to Iran.

Some of the refugees claimed the KDP was settling scores. Three refugees said they fled the Iraqi border town of Panjwin when they saw KDP fighters shoot 12 people.

The refugees refused to give their names and their account could not be confirmed.

The number of Iraqi Kurds crossing the border was far fewer than feared by Iran, which said Tuesday that 200,000 refugees were massed on its northwest boundary.

Around 5,000 refugees, arriving on foot or crammed into cars, buses and trucks, crossed into Iran at Bashmaq, the border guards said.

There has been no fighting in northern Iraq since the KDP took control of the region Monday. As a result, many residents who initially fled the northeastern city of Sulaymaniyah have headed home.

Jalal Talabani, head of the vanquished Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and dozens of his top commanders entered Iran late Tuesday, according to border guards who declined to give their names.

Witnesses, who also did not want to be named, said they had seen Talabani in Marivan, a large Iranian border town near Bashmaq.

The KDP's yellow flags and streamers were visible all the way up to the Iranian border, indicating the faction's near-total control of the region.

In 10 days of fighting, the KDP ousted the PUK from Iraq's northern regions, where U.S.-led allies set up a "safe haven" shortly after the 1991 Gulf War.

Saddam, seeking to keep the refugees at home, declared a general amnesty for all Kurds and lifted barriers between Iraq and the semi-autonomous Kurdish areas that have been in place since the "safe haven" was set up.

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OLD	PURGE DELETED MESSAGES (Compress Email Files)	BMH	BRIEF MAIL HELP
		FMH	FULL MAIL HELP
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r i

^BC-Iran-Iraq,616<

^Thousands of Kurdish Refugees Enter Iran<

^By +YALMAN+ +ONARAN+=

^Associated Press Writer=

^With AP Photo ANK101<

^Eds: UPDATES with new information on number of refugees in Bashmaq <

BASHMAQ, Iran (AP) ÷ Thousands of Kurds had crossed into Iran after an Iraq-backed faction seized control in Iraq's Kurdish north. But Kurds and border guards said Wednesday that many refugees wanted to return now that fighting had eased.

There were conflicting reports about the total number of Kurds who had fled across the border, with numbers ranging from the thousands to tens of thousands.

Border guards and some refugees at Bashmaq said dozens of commanders of the vanquished Kurdish group Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, including leader Jalal Talabani, were among those who crossed into Iran.

There also were unconfirmed reports that soldiers of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which is backed by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, had fired upon people waiting to cross, killing and wounding some of them. It was not immediately clear if the KDP was targeting rival fighters.

Border guards at Bashmaq said late Wednesday that about 5,000 people had crossed the border there, and that several thousand more were believed to have crossed elsewhere.

Those estimates were far smaller than official Iranian reports that ``tens of thousands'' of Kurds had poured into Iran to escape Saddam's army and the KDP. Official Tehran radio said 30,000 refugees were settled in camps in Western Azerbaijan province alone. Aid workers struggled to provide food, water and medical care, it said.

Refugees continued to arrive at Bashmaq after nightfall and Iranian officials late Wednesday put at 7,000 the number of Kurds housed in a makeshift refugee camp there.

With temperatures falling to 4 degrees C (39 degrees F), many of the tired-looking refugees at Bashmaq gathered around small camp fires or slept in cots or tents. They had arrived with whatever they could carry or pile into a vehicle, and they had little food or water.

An Iranian soldier, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said most of the refugees at Bashmaq had not been allowed beyond the border area.

``Most want to return to Kurdistan, but they are not allowed yet,'' the soldier said, without elaborating.

Casim Selim, a Kurdish teacher among refugees on the Iraqi side of the border, said about 2,000 Kurds on the Iranian side wanted to return to Iraq. ``They have all realized things are not like what they feared,'' he said.

There had been no fighting in northern Iraq since the Saddam-backed KDP took control of the eastern Kurdish region Monday night, routing the Iranian-backed PUK. The KDP had earlier captured the central city of Irbil with the direct help of Saddam's forces.

The U.N. refugee agency on Wednesday lowered from 300,000 to 50,000 its estimate of the number who left the key Kurdish city of Sulaymaniyah when it was seized Monday by the KDP. It said half of the 50,000 turned back and headed home.

Tuba Ali Sherif, a 40-year-old mother from Sulaymaniyah, was waiting on the Iraqi side for permission to cross to Iran to collect her son.

``My son fled yesterday, thinking Saddam was coming,'' she said. ``We saw on TV that Iraqi troops were in Irbil. So we were afraid. But there is no Saddam, we see now. I want to go tell my son that and bring him back home.''

Refugees and border guards said KDP forces had chased some people to

[Greece]

APW VVV59 Aa ----- Saddam Offers Amnesty in Bid to Keep Ku 09-11 6:50a

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld, 0546

Saddam Offers Amnesty in Bid to Keep Kurds at Home

Eds: ADDS 2 grafs with KDP leader saying there was no help from Iraqis

AP Photos SUL101-102, 104, ANK102-103, 105

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq (AP) - Saddam Hussein wasted no time in reasserting control of the north of his country after the collapse of a U.S.-declared "safe haven," lifting trade and travel barriers that had stood since the Gulf War.

Saddam's Kurdish allies flaunted their new authority over this northeastern city Tuesday, parading through the streets and looting the headquarters of their vanquished rivals for trophies - even toilet seats and light bulbs.

Tens of thousands of Kurds fled Sulaymaniyah for the rugged hills of nearby Iran after the Baghdad-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party rolled into the city on Monday night.

U.N. officials estimated up to 300,000 Kurds might have left, but many refugees started returning home Tuesday, by truck and taxi and on foot, reassured by news that Saddam's troops had not entered the city.

Saddam sought to discourage an exodus, declaring a general amnesty for all Kurds and lifting travel and trade restrictions between Iraq and the northern semi-autonomous Kurdish areas imposed at the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

The full ramifications of the announcement were not immediately clear. But Saddam and his Kurdish allies clearly had effectively eliminated the Kurdish "safe haven," established by U.S.-led forces five years ago.

The recent fighting started Aug. 31, when the Iraqi army and the Kurdistan Democratic Party teamed up to capture Irbil, the de facto Kurdish capital in the north.

U.S. missile strikes against southern Iraq last week seemed to deter the Iraqi army from taking part in further fighting. But with Iraqi forces marching behind the KDP, the faction has easily defeated its Kurdish rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

In addition to launching missiles against Iraqi military installations, the U.S. and allied nations expanded the so-called "no-fly zone" in southern Iraq.

Saddam retorted not only by announcing he would no longer honor the no-fly zones but also by ordering his forces to shoot at U.S. and allied aircraft.

Iraq claimed Tuesday it fired three surface-to-air missiles at allied aircraft over the no-fly zone, but no hits were reported. It was the fourth time in five days Iraq has reported shooting at warplanes over the zone.

In Sulaymaniyah, Iraqi troops were nowhere in sight Tuesday as the KDP celebrated its sweeping victory with an impromptu parade. Fighters carrying AK-47 rifles rode through the streets in pickup trucks decorated with yellow flags and streamers. Women and children dressed in yellow - the party color - and merchants hastily plastered photocopied pictures of KDP leader Massoud Barzani on their store windows.

In an interview with Associated Press Television, Barzani insisted his forces won without the aid of Iraqi troops.

"Certainly there were no Iraqi soldiers," he said. "Our people - they are pros and they did the job. If there was Iraqi forces, you would see them."

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^Iraqi Deputy Minister Blames United States For Crisis, Defends Action Against American Planes<

^Eds: RECAPS previous; UPDATES with developments late Wednesday<

^By ROBERT H. REID=

^Associated Press Writer=

UNITED NATIONS (AP) _ Iraq's deputy foreign minister accused the United States of escalating the crisis in northern Iraq and defended the targeting of U.S. warplanes as a legitimate act of defense.

U.S. officials said Wednesday that Iraqi gunners fired a missile at two F-16 jet fighters patrolling northern Iraq. The missile missed but the United States sent bombers and stealth fighters to the region, suggesting that a retaliatory strike was likely.

After meeting with U.N. ambassadors from France and Russia, deputy Foreign Minister Riyadh al-Qaysi said Iraq was "performing a sovereign act of self-defense against an act that is unlawfully forced upon the sovereignty of my country."

"That is the bottom line of the issue, nothing else," al-Qaysi said.

Last week, U.S. forces blasted air defense sites in southern Iraq with cruise missiles in what Washington said was an attempt to curb an offensive by Iraq and Kurdish allies against an Iranian-backed Kurdish faction in northern Iraq.

Al-Qaysi defended the offensive in support of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and said Iraq had violated no international principles by sending troops into the north of its own country.

"Iraq has done nothing, nothing, that would violate any international commitment on the part of Iraq," he said. "We have threatened no one, we have gone against no one whatsoever outside the borders of Iraq. We have not moved against anybody except for protection, tranquility and stability against external interference."

Asked whether Iraq was intentionally escalating the crisis by targeting American planes, al-Qaysi replied: "When you talk about escalating, who is escalating? Is it Iraq or the United States? It is not Iraq."

Al-Qaysi met with French and Russian diplomats in part to urge implementation of the oil-for-food deal, under which Baghdad could sell dlrs 2 billion worth of oil for an initial 180-day period to buy food and medicine.

Iraq accepted the plan last May. But President Clinton said last week the deal was on hold because of the crisis in northern Iraq.

European countries, however, are anxious for the plan to take effect as soon as possible. Italy is trying to convince the 15-member Security Council to urge Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to give the go-ahead as soon as possible.

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^U.S. Sends More Warplane, Showdown Appears Imminent<

^Eds: UPDATES with additional comment from Iraqi government, color, quotes from northern Iraq, unconfirmed reports of killings near Iran-Iraq border. CORRECTS 9th graf to note no-fly zone is over southern Iraq, sted of Kuwait.<

^AP Photos SUL101,103-6, ANK101<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ With a fresh round of U.S. air strikes widely expected, Iraqis braced for yet another confrontation Thursday. The government called Kuwait's decision to host U.S. warplanes "an act of war."

President Saddam Hussein fired his latest challenge at the Americans when his forces unleashed a missile Wednesday at U.S. warplanes enforcing the "no-fly zone" in northern Iraq.

The missile didn't hit the U.S. F-16s in the area. But the Americans promptly announced that B-52 bombers _ the same type of planes used in last week's attack in southern Iraq _ would be relocated to the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

F-117 Stealth fighter-bombers were being sent to the region as well, and U.S. sources in Kuwait confirmed that eight planes would be based at the al-Jaber air base in Kuwait.

"We consider this behavior from the Kuwaiti regime to be a flagrant aggression against the people of Iraq and an act of war against the Iraqi state," Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told the state-run Iraqi News Agency.

In a rambling commentary, Aziz likened the recent turmoil to the period just before Iraq's invasion of tiny Kuwait six years ago.

He said Kuwait's rulers were in "evil collaboration with America in conspiring against Iraq's people."

The comments reflected the heated rhetoric of the moment, but Aziz did not say if Iraq was taking any military actions to counter the Kuwaiti move.

The Americans expanded the no-fly zone over southern Iraq last week, making it even more difficult for Saddam to move his troops around the region without attracting notice from the U.S.-led air forces, which fly scores of sorties every day.

The American military actions against Iraq have received a rather cool reception in the Arab world, even among partners from the Gulf War coalition. But Kuwait, which still considers Iraq a serious threat, has been fully supportive.

In the past two weeks, Saddam has undertaken his biggest military venture since the end of the Gulf War and he now controls the north for the first time in five years.

Saddam sent troops into the "safe haven" to help Kurdish allies oust a rival Iranian-backed Kurdish group on Aug. 31.

After the Americans showered cruise missiles on Iraqi air defense sites in southern Iraq last week, Saddam vowed he would no longer honor the "damned imaginary" no-fly zones.

"We reserve the right to take action to protect our pilots who are enforcing the no-fly zones," White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Wednesday. "It doesn't matter whether he (Saddam) observes them or not. We enforce them."

The Iraqi offensive has sent thousands of refugees fleeing toward Turkey and Iran. Seeking to prevent an exodus, Saddam has declared a general amnesty for all Kurds and lifted travel and trade barriers between Iraq and the Kurdish area.

But the restrictions were still in place Thursday outside of Irbil, the main Kurdish city in the north.

An Associated Press reporter traveling south from the city was turned back at a checkpoint manned by soldiers of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the faction allied with Saddam.

The soldiers said no one was allowed to pass without special permission, the same conditions that have prevailed since the Kurdish safe area was established in 1991.

Kurdish residents said that while they have differences with Saddam, they don't want to see Iraq attacked again by the Americans.

"We've just been through so much with Kurds fighting each other. All we want is some peace for the Iraqi nation," said Diller Bakir, a waiter at a restaurant in Irbil. "Another U.S. bombing could put us back into war."

Meanwhile, border guards in Bashmaq, Iran, said some 7,000 people had entered from Iraq as of Wednesday evening, and several thousand more had crossed elsewhere.

Those estimates appeared far lower than those of Iran's official Tehran radio. It said "tens of thousands" of Iraqi Kurds had entered Iran and that aid workers were struggling to provide food, water and medical care for them in temporary camps along the border.

There were unconfirmed reports that KDP soldiers were settling scores with the vanquished Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Refugees said the KDP had executed 25 PUK fighters near the border, according to Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Buffer Zone<

^With VAN Turkey-Kurds<

^Turkey Calls on Iraq To Renew Hot Pursuit Agreement<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) ÷ Turkey is seeking to renew an agreement with Iraq that allowed it to pursue Turkish Kurdish rebels across the border into northern Iraq, a news report said Thursday.

The daily Milliyet said Turkey had also asked Iraq to put pressure on an Iraqi Kurdish group now allied with Baghdad so it curbs forays into Turkey by the rebels.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said he could not confirm the report, but another official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Turkey viewed such an agreement as an option.

Iraq opposes Turkey's plan to establish a buffer zone extending 20 kilometers (12 miles) into northern Iraq to keep the rebels from crossing into Turkey.

Saddam Hussein sent an envoy to Turkey to express Baghdad's position, but he appeared open to the possibility of renewing the so-called ``hot pursuit'' agreement that lapsed after the Gulf War.

``We are working on formulas that won't violate Iraq's territorial integrity,'' Hamed Yosef Humadi told reporters before returning to Iraq Thursday.

Humadi also expressed opposition to the U.S.-led air force based at Incirlik air base in southern Turkey to protect Kurds north of the 36th parallel.

Turkish Minister Tansu Ciller said Wednesday that Turkey was determined to go ahead with the buffer zone. Officials have said the plan is a temporary measure to secure the border.

Last year, Turkey deployed 35,000 soldiers in northern Iraq in an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge the rebels.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, have been waging a war for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

(sh/vls)

[Kurdish]

APW VVV67 Aa ----- Turkey: Evacuation of Pro-American Kurd 09-12 8:50p

BC-Turkey-US-Iraq

Turkey: Evacuation of Pro-American Kurds Still to Begin

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey is still working out the details of an agreement with Washington to allow Iraqi Kurds associated with U.S. humanitarian efforts to enter this country on a temporary basis, Turkish officials said Thursday.

U.S. officials in Washington said the Kurds risked retaliation by Saddam Hussein's forces and that efforts were under way to move them out quickly from northern Iraq.

"Turkey has approved the request solely from a humanitarian point of view," said Sermet Atacanli, a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

But he said there were still some "technical points" that had to be worked out before the evacuation could begin.

The evacuation would involve an estimated 2,500 Kurds and their families who worked for the U.S.-led allied force that patrolled northern Iraq or for a U.S. aid agency.

The United States has portrayed them as political targets, hinting some of them may qualify for sanctuary in the United States if Turkey gave them temporary haven.

"Turkey is always favorable to humanitarian requests," Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Thursday of her government's approval of the U.S. request to allow the Kurds to enter Turkey.

The Ankara government, however, is opposed to opening its doors to Kurdish refugees, making clear that the Kurds would have to seek permanent sanctuary elsewhere.

(vls/sf)

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'The most optimistic scenario' would see

[Iranian]

APW VVV71 Aa ----- With BC-Iraq-Kurds

09-13 5:34p

BC-UN-Iraq Refugees 1st Ld-Writethru

With BC-Iraq-Kurds

Iraq Refugees Face New Land Mine Dangers, U.N. Says

Eds: RECASTS to reflect that mines are in Iraq, not Iran

GENEVA (AP) - The U.N. refugee agency said Friday that up to 40,000 refugees from fighting in northern Iraq are now facing the new danger of land mines.

"Mines are a major problem," said Rupert Colville, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, for refugees crossing at the border with Iran.

On Wednesday, there was a major explosion in Syramband, on the Iran-Iraq border, where 3,000 refugees are located, he said.

"It was next to people waiting to cross into Iran," Colville noted. It was not known whether anyone was injured.

Mountain passes between the two countries are heavily mined with the explosive devices, so people are staying on the roads, he said.

High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, pledged Thursday to help Iran with refugee influx by releasing emergency funds to buy and transport relief items.

"The Iranian government has a remarkable track record in giving asylum to many desperate people in recent years, and UNHCR is keen to help it come to the need of these latest refugees," she said.

In addition to those clustered in Syramband, UNHCR teams visiting the area have located 24,000 refugees in Sardasht and 3,000 in Bashmaq.

In Sardasht area, Iranian Red Crescent Society and Iran's Ministry of Health have been providing assistance to the refugees, including tents, blankets and food.

"The relief effort is up and running," Colville said.

But he said there were not enough tents available so some families have been sleeping outside. There is sufficient clean water from mountain streams, but not enough food supplies for all the refugees, he said.

There are some health problems, including cases of flu and diarrhea, he said.

On the Iraq side, Colville said the situation was fluid.

"One day, you can find 5,000 to 6,000 people and the next day they have disappeared," he said. Some have probably crossed into Iran, he added.

Colville also said many people were returning to Sulaymaniyah, the city Kurdish fighters backed by Saddam Hussein captured earlier this week.

(eo)

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[turkey]

APW VVV71 Aa ----- Tension High As U.S. Beefs Up Forces In 09-13 7:02p

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld-Writethru,0701

Tension High As U.S. Beefs Up Forces In Gulf

Eds: Recasts throughout to UPDATE with Iraqi press comment; arrival of stealth planes. No pickup.

AP Photos IRI02;SUL101;BAG101,102

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - As a new batch of American warplanes arrived in the region, Iraq on Friday accused President Clinton of plotting war and "killing innocent people" as an election tactic.

The United States was moving sophisticated weaponry to the Gulf, including the F-117A, a stealth attack bomber that will be based in Kuwait. Four planes landed Friday evening in Kuwait and four more were expected later.

While an American air strike seemed likely, there was no sign of when it might happen.

"America's ethical collapse has reached the point of making an election card out of attacking nations ... and killing innocent people," said the government-run daily Al-Thawra. "The election race is based on who will be able to hit Iraq harder."

The Americans were sending a second aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, toward the Gulf. The army said it was sending two Patriot missile units and about 150 soldiers from Texas to the Gulf region, apparently to join Patriot batteries already in Saudi Arabia.

The question in Baghdad on Friday was not whether President Clinton would retaliate, but when.

Rasmia Jaber, 44, a housewife and mother of three, said she was bracing for another air strike.

"I am buying things that I may need if we are attacked again," she said.

But American attacks or threats against Saddam often boost his popularity at home.

"We accept Saddam as president regardless of what happened and we will stand by him," said Abu Marwan, a 36-year-old store owner.

Iraq on Friday complained that Western warplanes were violating Iraqi air space as they enforced the "no-fly" zones. Iraq said it recorded 42 overflights in the south, but none in the north.

The zones were created after the Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south from Saddam's army. The United States extended the southern zone last week after Iraq launched an offensive into the north.

There was no shooting reported Friday. Iraq said it fired missiles at U.S. warplanes over a no-fly zone on both Wednesday and Thursday, but no planes were hit.

Pentagon officials confirmed that Iraq fired three missiles Thursday but said they were aimed at an area near the southern no-fly zone where allied aircraft were not flying.

Kuwait agreed to let the United States base some of the American jets on its territory, which Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz called "a flagrant act of aggression against the people of Iraq and an act of war against the Iraqi state."

Kuwait's information minister, Sheik Saud Nasser al-Sabah, said of Iraq's threats: "Kuwait is a sovereign country which has the right to undertake all necessary measures to safeguard its security."

Meanwhile, several military helicopters from the Arab countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council were at Kuwait's Ali al-Salim air base, north of Kuwait City, for a joint military exercise, the Gulf News Agency reported Friday.

The drill is set to run from Saturday through next Thursday.

The choppers' arrival late Thursday night coincided with the presence of about 1,200 U.S. soldiers already conducting an exercise.

The showdown between Iraq and the United States began Aug. 31 when Saddam's troops moved into northern Iraq to help one Kurdish faction defeat a second faction in the Kurds' ongoing civil war.

The conflagration quickly engulfed other parts of northern Iraq, with the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party winning control of the entire region. The fighting has sent thousands of refugees fleeing toward Turkey and Iran.

Iran said that 39,000 refugees have entered from northeastern Iraq this week. The United Nations cited similar figures.

Iran said aid workers were struggling to provide food, water and medical care in temporary border camps.

[turkey]

APW VVV68 Aa ----- Kurds Welcome a Return of Open Borders 09-12 11:54p

BC-Kurds-Open Borders,0436

Kurds Welcome a Return of Open Borders in the North

With Iraq-Kurds

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - The Kurds in northern Iraq may not be fans of Saddam Hussein, but they're applauding his decision to bring down the trade and travel restrictions that limited their movements over the past five years.

Taxi drivers are happy for the business, shoppers expect to see more goods in the stores and families are reuniting for the first time since 1991.

"We hope opening the border will put a lot of poor people to work," said Najdat Adil, owner of a taxi depot.

When the Kurdish "safe haven" was established after the Gulf War, it gave the Kurds a degree of autonomy and kept Saddam's troops out of the north.

But in a bid to limit Baghdad's influence, an unofficial border was set up, and crossing it required official permission that was difficult to obtain.

As a result, many of the impoverished Kurds felt they were placed under a double embargo: the U.N. sanctions that covered all of Iraq, and the de facto border that kept them from trading with the rest of the country.

"I heard on the radio that Saddam was opening the border, so immediately came to see my relatives," said Mohammed Hussein, who traveled from the oil city of Kirkuk. "I couldn't believe it when we passed easily through the checkpoint."

Saddam announced Tuesday that he was lifting the restrictions, and the border opened Wednesday.

Taxi driver Ala Kareem, a Baghdad resident, immediately brought four Arab passengers to Irbil. They each paid him the equivalent of 12 dollars, a sizeable sum of money in Iraq these days.

"Driving up to here (to Irbil), it felt like we were one nation for the first time in a long time," Kareem said.

Abdullah Ali, a cloth merchant, said he made the trip from Kirkuk to see if there was going to be a big market for yellow fabric - the color of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the victorious Kurdish faction in the north.

He was encouraged by what he saw.

At the former headquarters of the defeated Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, children were putting a fresh coat of yellow paint to wipe out the old PUK green.

But some restrictions were still in place Thursday.

An Associated Press reporter traveling from Irbil toward the south was turned back at one checkpoint manned by KDP soldiers.

The soldiers said no one was allowed to pass without special permission, the same conditions that had prevailed previously.

[Tashkent]

APW VVV68 Aa ----- Iraq, U.S. Head Toward Another Confront 09-13 3:56a

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1005

Iraq, U.S. Head Toward Another Confrontation

Eds: Recaps previous.

AP Photos IRB102;SUL101;BAG101,102

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Iraq and the United States have moved closer to a showdown, with more U.S. firepower sent to the Persian Gulf, Iraq claiming missile attacks on American jets and both countries spitting harsh rhetoric.

Each side seemed willing to raise the stakes but neither looked prepared to make a decisive move, after almost two weeks of conflict.

Iraq said it fired missiles at U.S. warplanes over a no-fly zone for a second straight day Thursday, hours after accusing Kuwait of an "act of war" for agreeing to open its airfields to American jets.

Pentagon officials confirmed that Iraq fired three surface-to-air missiles Thursday, but said they were aimed at an area near the southern "no-fly" zone where allied aircraft were not flying.

"We had nothing in the area. Clearly he released them only to make a statement," a military official said on condition of anonymity. "There were no (radar) tracks," indicating guidance systems were not left on long enough to direct the missiles to an intended target. "It took a hard search to find them."

For days, Iraq has reported firing on U.S. and allied aircraft in the no-fly zones in the north and south. The only other confirmed attack came Wednesday, when Iraqi forces fired a missile at two F-16s in the northern no-fly zone. That missile also missed.

The United States responded by sending four B-52 bombers and eight F-117 planes to fortify the some 200 aircraft in the region. The Pentagon also said a second aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, will join the USS Carl Vinson already in the Gulf.

Kuwait agreed to let the United States base some of the American jets on its territory, a move Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz called "a flagrant act of aggression against the people of Iraq and an act of war against the Iraqi state."

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry, in Washington, called Aziz's comments "rash" and "totally unacceptable."

"U.S. military forces do not pose a threat to Iraq," he said.

But, noting that American forces moved into the area in force only after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Perry said: "If there is any challenge to those forces, we have the responsibility to protect them. The United States will take all necessary and appropriate actions."

Aziz, in a rambling commentary run by the official Iraqi News Agency, likened the recent turmoil to the period six years ago just before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. He said Kuwait's rulers were in "evil collaboration with America in conspiring against Iraq's people."

He did not say if Iraq would take any military action to counter the Kuwaiti move.

The past two weeks have seen Saddam undertake his biggest military venture since the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, sending troops Aug. 31 into the north to help Kurdish allies rout a rival Iranian-backed Kurdish group.

With that victory, Saddam effectively wiped out the Kurdish safe haven that the United States and its allies established at the end of the war, giving him control of the north for the first time in five years.

In response, the Americans showered cruise missiles on Iraqi air defense sites in southern Iraq last week and expanded a southern no-fly zone set up to protect Shiite Muslims.

The expanded zone makes it even more difficult for Saddam to use his air force or move his troops around the region without attracting notice from the U.S.-led air forces, which fly scores of sorties every day.

The U.S. actions against Iraq received a cool reception in the Arab world, even among partners from the Gulf War coalition. But Kuwait, which still considers Iraq a serious threat, has been fully supportive.

A spokesman for U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who met Thursday with a delegation of ambassadors from Persian Gulf countries, said regional support for the U.S. effort remains strong.

"The coalition remains very much in place and remains very much active and engaged," spokesman Glyn Davies said.

After the U.S. missile attack, Saddam immediately vowed to no longer honor the "damned imaginary" zones in the north and south and urged his troops to fire on any U.S. or allied aircraft.

The Iraqi offensive has sent thousands of refugees fleeing toward Turkey and Iran. Among the refugees, border guards said, were commanders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the rebel group that Saddam's Kurdish allies - the Kurdistan Democratic Party - routed from the north.

Refugees reportedly told Iran's official news agency that KDP soldiers had executed 25 PUK fighters near the border. The report could not immediately be confirmed.

KDP leader Massoud Barzani on Thursday denied reports that he was planning to sign a political pact with Saddam. He also condemned Washington's Kurdish policy.

"Nobody has supported us, including the United States, never," he said. "And now that we are trying to improve relations with Baghdad, I don't understand why (the West) gets so angry."

Iran said Thursday that 39,000 refugees have entered from northeastern Iraq this week. The United Nations cites lower figures, but it was clear refugees were continuing to seek refuge in Iran. Iran said aid workers were struggling to provide food, water and medical care in temporary border camps.

French officials said Thursday they were very worried about renewed Mideast tensions and were talking with the United States and Britain.

France coolly reacted to last week's U.S. barrage of cruise missiles. Paris also refused to help enforce the extension of the no-fly zone.

Once a major trading partner with Iraq, France has taken a softer position on anti-Iraqi sanctions in recent months.

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^BC-Turkey-US-Iraq<

^Turkey: Evacuation of Pro-American Kurds Still to Begin<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey is still working out the details of an agreement with Washington to allow Iraqi Kurds associated with U.S. humanitarian efforts to enter this country on a temporary basis, Turkish officials said Thursday.

U.S. officials in Washington said the Kurds risked retaliation by Saddam Hussein's forces and that efforts were under way to move them out quickly from northern Iraq.

"Turkey has approved the request solely from a humanitarian point of view," said Sermet Atacanli, a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

But he said there were still some "technical points" that had to be worked out before the evacuation could begin.

The evacuation would involve an estimated 2,500 Kurds and their families who worked for the U.S.-led allied force that patrolled northern Iraq or for a U.S. aid agency.

The United States has portrayed them as political targets, hinting some of them may qualify for sanctuary in the United States if Turkey gave them temporary haven.

"Turkey is always favorable to humanitarian requests," Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Thursday of her government's approval of the U.S. request to allow the Kurds to enter Turkey.

The Ankara government, however, is opposed to opening its doors to Kurdish refugees, making clear that the Kurds would have to seek permanent sanctuary elsewhere.

(vls/sf)

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds-No Fly

^Kurds Wonder About the Future of the No-Fly Mission<

^With BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ Coming out of a mosque after Friday prayers, Mohammed Farooq Malik squinted into the sun-bleached sky.

"God is up there to protect the Kurds," he said. "America? What can it do? Do we feel protected now? Did we ever?"

Such questions _ mixing concern and cynicism _ are heard across northern Iraq. The U.S.-led air mission to protect the Kurds from President Saddam Hussein lost much of its definition this week when a Kurdish militia allied with Saddam and drove out its rival in a blitzkrieg offensive.

The Western air force, based in southern Turkey, did not intervene during the rout, though the U.S. forces in the Gulf fired cruise missiles on southern Iraq, hundreds of miles (kilometers) away.

In the narrow sense, the no-fly zone has been successful in keeping Iraqi aircraft out of the region.

Also, it should discourage Saddam from sending troops into the north and it allows the Americans and their allies to maintain close surveillance.

But when the crunch came, it provided no protection for the Kurdish "safe haven," which has effectively collapsed over the past two weeks.

Now, with Saddam's influence returning to northern Iraq, the relevance and objective of the air mission is under scrutiny.

"Who are they trying to protect: the Kurdish people or Western interests?" asked Rahman Pisu, a student of foreign affairs at Irbil University. "I think we (the Kurds) were an excuse to try to keep Saddam in check."

The Americans have acknowledged as much, saying they have no intention of getting bogged down in the morass of northern Iraq.

There are dozens of flights daily over the northern and southern no-fly zones, and there's been no indication that the air mission in the north will be cut back or scrapped. However, Turkey has only reluctantly gone along with the operation in recent months under substantial U.S. pressure.

The Iraqis fired a missile at U.S. F-16s over the northern no-fly zone Wednesday, and further confrontations are likely now that Saddam has said he will no longer honor the air exclusionary zone.

Northern Iraq remains a volatile place. Several armed groups have been active in recent years, though no one has been fully in control. The two Iraqi Kurdish factions have fought among themselves. Turkish troops have come across the border to chase their own Kurdish rebels, and Iranian forces have also been active in the region.

The region may become more stable with the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the faction allied with Saddam, now in full control of all the major cities.

Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani has insisted that Iraqi forces will not come to northern Iraq, though his group could do little to resist Saddam.

"There has been no political agreement with Baghdad, we have no thought about negotiations yet," Barazani said Thursday.

Some Kurds, previously skeptical of the air mission's value, are even more doubtful now that Saddam has bonds with Barzani.

"Sometimes weeks go by and I don't see a single plane (on patrol)," said Mohammed Al-Rashid, who directs traffic at one of Irbil's main intersections.

"I look down the road, wondering if Iraqi tanks will come back. If it happens, I won't be looking up in the air for the American planes to help. It will be too late," he said.

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mosb-103, moscow--russian foreign minister yevgeny primakov meeting with nicolo manchini, head of the italian parliament delegation.

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^BC-Iraq-Waiting to Flee<

^NY Int for AMs<

^Kurds Working For American Relief Groups Await Evacuation<

^AP Photos Available<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHO, Iraq (AP) _ Fearing retaliation by Saddam Hussein's forces, several thousand Kurds who worked for American organizations in northern Iraq anxiously await evacuation by the United States.

Despite U.S. plans to bring out as many as 2,500 people, there was no movement at the Turkish-Iraqi border Friday, only uncertainty.

"We're just waiting," said Talat Nasir, a Kurdish guard at the U.S.-led Military Coordination Center (MCC) in this town a few miles from the Turkish border. "Everybody's afraid. We all want to leave, but don't when or how."

"Iraqi TV said all 'collaborators' (with the United States) will be killed -- guards, workers, even custodians," Nasir added. "I just want to get out of here. It doesn't matter where -- Turkey, America, or anywhere else which takes me."

The Turkish government agreed to Washington's request this week that Kurds associated with U.S. organizations and humanitarian efforts be allowed to enter Turkey on a temporary basis. They would then be given sanctuary in the United States or another country.

U.S. officials in Ankara call it an "ongoing operation," but there was no sign in northern Iraq that it had begun. It was unclear whether the refugees would be taken out by helicopter or in convoys overland.

All American nationals working for U.S.-governmental groups left last week, soon after a Kurdish faction's cooperation with Saddam Hussein became clear.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) took over Irbil, the largest Kurdish city, on Aug. 31 with Saddam's help. In the following days, it completed its victory by pushing its rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, out of northern Iraq.

Western countries and many locals are afraid that the KDP's cooperation with Saddam will lead to a return of Baghdad's reach in this enclave, which has been a de-facto state protected by a U.S.-led air force since the Gulf War.

Ten days ago, after the KDP's victory was clear, the Western military command pulled out of Zakho and moved to Silopi, a few miles inside the Turkish border, leaving 10 locals behind.

Since then other Kurds, fearing Saddam's secret police have already infiltrated the Kurdish enclave, have taken refuge in the former headquarters.

KDP officials have repeatedly stressed that Kurds who worked for American organizations are in no danger, and that the agencies should return and resume their humanitarian work.

But the group also appears reluctant to lose so many well-educated English speakers and their families.

"I don't understand why they should go," an angry Masoud Barzani, the KDP leader, told reporters Thursday in Salahuddin.

"All the people in Kurdistan are protected, respected and provided for."

Only after an Associated Press reporter pressed whether they would be allowed to leave, did Barzani reply, without enthusiasm,

"Yes, they are free to go."

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^Unlike 1991, Streets Quiet as Arabs Rail Against Both Sides<

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^AP Photos CAI101<

^By ANTHONY SHADID=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ In one of Cairo's countless, shabby cafes, a Egyptian volunteers his view of the latest standoff with Iraq: only the posturing of America outdoes Saddam Hussein's foolishness.

"What President Clinton did has made us love Saddam, despite all his faults," said Mahmoud Helmi, sipping scalding, dark tea under the shade of a tree. "Just maybe we'll side with him."

From Bahrain to Sudan, the Iraqi leader can still count on deep-seated skepticism of Washington's motives in an Arab world wary of U.S. intervention.

Opposition newspapers in Egypt rail at "American aggression," and editorial cartoons suggest that Clinton stands to benefit in November's presidential elections from the renewed fighting.

Often, the biggest complaint is the double standard many Arabs see in Washington's aggressive answer to Iraq and its muted response to the plight of Muslims in Bosnia or Chechens fighting for independence from Russia.

Some recall Israel's offensive in southern Lebanon, which Washington initially supported. The fighting culminated in April with Israel's shelling of a U.N. compound in southern Lebanon that killed 91 Lebanese refugees.

"Did the Americans come to the rescue during the massacres in former Yugoslavia or when Israel massacred Lebanese civilians here?" asked Tony Sawaya, an insurance broker in Beirut.

That anger, however, is tempered by a weariness of Saddam's defiance. Many Arabs see the Iraqi leader as rash and unpredictable, confounding people who cannot decide whether he is, in fact, fearless or foolish.

Those sentiments stand in contrast to the 1991 Gulf War, when Saddam's opposition to the United States made him immensely popular in the streets of some Arab capitals. The praise fed on the resentment of poor Arabs for their rich Kuwaiti neighbors.

In Algeria, wallet-sized snapshots of Saddam were circulated everywhere from shops in the casbah to schoolyards, and his posters went up in stores in the Yemeni capital of San'a.

To the dismay of some Arab governments, pro-Iraq protests erupted in Tunisia, Sudan, Yemen and Libya. In an image the West will not soon forget, Palestinians stood on their roofs cheering as Iraqi missiles blazed toward Israel.

Six years later, pictures of hungry families in Baghdad and the misery caused by six years of U.N. sanctions have led to widespread sympathy in the Arab world for the plight of Iraqis _ and anger at both the U.N. Security Council and Saddam for not doing enough to lift them.

"I think they've suffered enough," said Sayed Kadhem, a 56-year-old laborer in Manama, Bahrain. "They should be spared any further hardship as a result of their leader's actions."

While many berate Washington for not seeking support of either the Security Council or its Arab allies, they criticize Saddam for giving Washington yet another pretext to intervene.

"The United States exaggerates but Saddam gives them the justification to do so," said Samir Kayyat, a civil engineer in Amman, Jordan.

He added: "Saddam is not the one who will suffer, the people are the only victims."

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds-No Fly<

^Changing Climate in Northern Iraq Adds Questions to No-Fly Mission<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ Coming out of a mosque after Friday prayers, Mohammed Farooq Malik squinted into the sun-bleached sky.

"God is up there to protect the Kurds," he said. "America? What can it do? Do we feel protected now? Did we ever?"

Such questions _ mixing concern and cynicism _ are heard across northern Iraq, where a U.S.-led air mission to protect the Kurds from Saddam Hussein abruptly lost its definition. A Kurdish militia allied with Saddam and summarily drove out its Iranian-backed rival in a blitzkrieg offensive.

The Western air force, based at Incirlik in southern Turkey, did nothing during the rout. Its stated mandate after the Persian Gulf War was to keep Iraqi aircraft out of northern Iraq, and Saddam sent no planes or gunships north to aid the Kurdish Democratic Party. Iraqi ground forces pushed into Irbil on Aug. 31 to begin the military drive, but pulled back after U.S. cruise missile strikes in southern Iraq.

Now, with Saddam's influence returning to northern Iraq _ at the invitation of the Kurdish group in charge _ the relevance and objective of the air mission is under scrutiny.

"Who are they trying to protect: the Kurdish people or Western interests?" asked Rahman Pisu, a student of foreign affairs at Irbil University.

If the mission's aim is solely to keep Iraqi aircraft out of northern Iraq, it has been a success. Saddam's warplanes occasionally slip into the no-fly zone above the 36th parallel, but quickly retreat.

But it's less ascertainable whether "no-fly" really means "don't enter" _ by plane, tank or personnel carrier. Some Kurds believe the air mission has less to do with them, and more to do with keeping Iraq's armed forces away from the borders of NATO ally Turkey _ just as the southern no-fly zone seek to create a buffer between Iraqi forces and Kuwait and much of the Saudi border.

"I think we (the Kurds) were an excuse to try to keep Saddam in check," said Pisu.

With Saddam and the Democratic Party apparently drawing closer, the West could be placed in a difficult spot if Kurdish leadership asks Iraqi military to take up positions to repel any possible counterattack by the defeated Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani has insisted that Iraqi forces will not come to northern Iraq, but his group is decidedly the weak partner in the alliance with Saddam and would be in no position to oppose such moves.

Some Kurds, previously skeptical of the air mission's ability to protect them, are even more doubtful now that Saddam has bonds with Barzani.

"Sometimes weeks go by and I don't see a single plane (on patrol)," said Mohammed Al-Rashid, who directs traffic at one of Irbil's main intersections. "I look down the road and wondering if Iraqi tanks will come back. If it happens, I won't be looking up in the air for the American planes to help. It will be too late."

In Sulaymaniyah, the Western air force is often seen as something distant and detached from their worries. The city _ the last Patriotic Union stronghold lost earlier this week _ is below the 36th parallel. That's out of the no-fly zone and, technically, out of bounds for Western protection if Iraqi troops entered.

"The no-fly zone means nothing to us. It never did," said Ali Dukani, a street sweeper. "I don't feel safer just because American and Europe tell us we should feel that way."

(bm)

nicosia/ankara: that's about all I could wring out from my end of this no-fly topic. You may want to flesh it out a bit with a military analyst or comment from Incirlik on possible changes in mission. Also could ask them about numbers of flights, etc.

We couldn't get down to Qush Tapa today, either. They are not letting journalists go down there no matter how much we plead. There were rumors on street that Iraqi troops pulled out of area, which is above 36th parallel (we did story last week on it), but we can't confirm it. I'll check with UN here to see if they got thru.

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^Iraq Announces It Will Cease Firing At Warplanes<

^Eds: RECASTS to move up Iraq's determination to resume firing if warplanes continue missions after deadline, UPDATES with White House reaction. Picks up 2nd graf 4th Ld, ``The United ...''<

^AP Photos IRB102;SUL101;BAG101,102<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq announced Friday it was suspending its attempts to shoot down U.S. and allied warplanes enforcing no-fly zones in the north and south of the country.

But it also said it would resume firing at the planes if the allies didn't reciprocate by ceasing their overflights after midnight Friday (2000 GMT).

The ruling Revolution Command Council said it decided to ``suspend retaliation against U.S. aggression as of midnight Friday.''

If U.S. warplanes continue their missions after the midnight deadline, ``Iraq will retaliate in kind,''' the state-run Iraqi News Agency reported.

The council said its gesture came in response to an appeal from Russia.

The suspension of activity against allied warplanes was intended to give Russia and other friendly countries time to help defuse the crisis between Iraq and the allies, the council said.

Asked about the Iraqi announcement, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said in Washington: ``We'll be looking at actions, not statements, from Baghdad.''

As a new batch of American warplanes arrived in the region, Iraq earlier accused President Clinton of plotting war and ``killing innocent people'' as an election tactic.

The United States was moving sophisticated weaponry to the Gulf, including the F-117A, a stealth attack bomber that will be based in Kuwait. Four planes landed Friday evening in Kuwait and four more were expected later.

While an American air strike seemed likely, there was no sign of when it might happen.

``America's ethical collapse has reached the point of making an election card out of attacking nations ... and killing innocent people,''' said the government-run daily Al-Thawra. ``The election race is based on who will be able to hit Iraq harder.''

The Americans were sending a second aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, toward the Gulf. The army said it was sending two Patriot missile units and about 150 soldiers from Texas to the Gulf region, apparently to join Patriot batteries already in Saudi Arabia.

The question in Baghdad on Friday was not whether President Clinton would retaliate, but when.

Rasmia Jaber, 44, a housewife and mother of three, said she was bracing for another air strike.

"I am buying things that I may need if we are attacked again," she said.

But American attacks or threats against Saddam often serve to boost his popularity at home, where he is respected by some for standing up to the West.

"We accept Saddam as president regardless of what happened and we will stand by him," said Abu Marwan, a 36-year-old store owner.

Iraq on Friday complained that Western warplanes were violating Iraqi air space as they enforced the "no-fly" zones. Iraq said it recorded 42 overflights in the south, but none in the north.

There was no shooting reported Friday. Iraq said it fired missiles at U.S. warplanes over a no-fly zone on both Wednesday and Thursday, but no planes were hit.

Pentagon officials confirmed that Iraq fired three surface-to-air missiles Thursday but said they were aimed at an area near the southern no-fly zone where allied aircraft were not flying.

Kuwait agreed to let the United States base some of the American jets on its territory, a move Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz called "a flagrant act of aggression against the people of Iraq and an act of war against the Iraqi state."

Kuwait's information minister, Sheik Saud Nasser al-Sabah, said of Iraq's threats: "Kuwait is a sovereign country which has the right to undertake all necessary measures to safeguard its security."

Meanwhile, several military helicopters from the countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council were at Kuwait's Ali al-Salim air base, north of Kuwait City, for a joint military exercise, the Gulf News Agency reported Friday.

The drill, code-named Peninsula Falcon 96-1, is set to run from Saturday through next Thursday.

The choppers' arrival late Thursday night coincided with the presence of about 1,200 U.S. soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, and Fort McPherson, Georgia, who were already conducting an exercise codenamed Intrinsic Action in Kuwait.

The showdown between Iraq and the United States began Aug. 31 when Saddam's troops moved into northern Iraq to help one Kurdish faction vanquish another in a flare-up in the Kurds' civil war.

The conflagration quickly engulfed other parts of northern Iraq, with the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party winning control of the entire region. The fighting has sent thousands of refugees fleeing toward Turkey and Iran.

Iran said that 39,000 refugees have entered from northeastern Iraq this week. The United Nations cited similar figures.

Iran said aid workers were struggling to provide food, water and medical care in temporary border camps.

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^CIA-Backed Saddam Opponents Wait For Doors To Open To West<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

SALAH AD-DIN, Iraq (AP) _ In a ramshackle complex that was once hotel, more than 250 people affiliated with a CIA-backed group opposing Saddam Hussein ration food, sleep outdoors and dispatch appeals for political asylum.

In their view, Saddam's agents are everywhere and are out for blood. "We are in mortal danger," said a member of the Iraqi National Congress.

Just up the hill and around the bend is the headquarters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the faction that asked for Saddam's military help last month to defeat a rival Kurdish group.

The KDP insists it is in control of northern Iraq and accuses INC members of exaggerating their peril in order to get a free ticket out of their impoverished and volatile homeland.

The Kurds are in control of their own destiny, the KDP says. Some KDP officials agree that Saddam's agents are "everywhere," but they say that's nothing new in Iraqi Kurdistan.

"They have shaken hands with Saddam," an INC leader said in Salah ad-Din, a mountaintop town about 25 kilometers (15 miles) northeast of Irbil. "We cannot deal with anyone who deals with Saddam."

The INC group fled Irbil when the city was stormed by a combined Iraqi-KDP force Aug. 31. It claims that at least 30 INC fighters were killed and 250 others were captured by Iraqis _ allegedly turned over by residents collaborating with Baghdad.

"Whether those taken away are dead we don't know," said an INC member who, like the others, spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

The INC, founded after the 1991 Gulf War, was the umbrella for Iraqi dissident groups _ including the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the faction vanquished by the KDP.

The CIA helped the Iraqi National Congress make press releases, books and radio and television broadcasts, but there is no indication of CIA involvement in INC military activities.

The upheaval of the past two weeks tore apart the INC, leaving just a small core of leaders and militiamen. Their offices in Irbil were sacked, and they said they reached Salah ad-Din with little money and few possessions.

The INC fighters sleep on the ground outside the cracked concrete building, formerly used as the INC broadcast facility. The others, including five wives and 11 children, sleep elsewhere in the complex.

Most of the INC leaders fled to Kurdish-controlled areas after the Gulf War and left their families behind.

Their food is cooked on a single burner inside or on three cinder block fireplaces outside. Everything, including bread, is doled out in meager portions to save money, they said.

The INC people mill around the complex but rarely venture out _ adding to the restlessness and frustration.

Guards armed with automatic weapons are posted around the clock at the metal gate to the compound.

"There are Iraqi agents everywhere," said an INC member, chain smoking cheap Turkish cigarettes and lowering his voice to a whisper. "We can't trust anyone. We are surrounded by enemies. Our only hope is to get out."

They have appealed for asylum to President Clinton and other world leaders. A U.S. official said in Washington on Friday that the vast majority of Iraqi Kurds and their families who worked on U.S. humanitarian programs in northern Iraq are expected to resettle in the United States.

They estimate their money and supplies will last only a few weeks.

"After that, we may be at Saddam's mercy," said a young man. "I will commit suicide _ we all will commit mass suicide _ rather than be taken prisoner by Saddam."

The Kurdish Democratic Party scoffs at such talk. Hypersensitive about its new alliance with Baghdad, the KDP says it turned to Saddam only after the West ignored its pleas for help. It insists that little has changed in northern Iraq.

"The INC is making incredible claims just to make their case for political asylum," said a KDP leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "They are in no more danger than anyone."

The KDP leader accused INC members of hiding their real motives. "They are free to leave, but I wish they would be truthful about it," he said.

"Their lives are not in danger. Look, everyone wants to leave here _ but for economic reasons. They want to be economic refugees just like everyone."

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^Defense Secretary Perry To Meet Turkish Officials Monday<

Eds: ADDS Ciller's proposals for Turkish-US aid to northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry will meet with Turkish officials Monday to try to muster support for possible military retaliation against Iraq, Washington's ambassador here said.

Ambassador Marc Grossman told reporters that also on the agenda would be the future of the southern Turkish airbase of Incirlik, the base for an allied force which operates overflights to monitor the no-fly zone in northern Iraq.

Turkey, a staunch ally of the United States during the Gulf War six years ago, is less willing now to join in an alliance against Iraq.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, heading Turkey's new Islamic-led government, has been concentrating on improving relations with Iraq and the rest of the Arab world and has remained silent on the latest confrontation.

But his close aides have openly criticized the United States for airstrikes on Baghdad earlier this month to retaliate against Iraq's incursion into Kurdish enclaves.

Turkey barred the U.S. from using Incirlik, where some 50 U.S., British and French jets are stationed, to strike at Iraqi targets.

The force was set up after the Gulf War to protect Kurds from attacks from Baghdad.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said after a meeting with Grossman that Turkey had proposed that Washington and Ankara handle together humanitarian aid efforts for northern Iraq.

Turkey has expressed concern about some foreign aid organization operating in northern Iraq, suspecting that these may be aiding its own autonomy seeking Kurdish rebels. Turkish Kurdish rebels stage hit-and-run attacks on Turkish targets from bases in northern Iraq.

Mrs. Ciller said the aid work could be handled by the Turkish Red Crescent Organization with U.S. assistance.

Many foreign aid organizations left the area with the Iraqi army's foray into the region earlier this month.

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'We're on our honeymoon and for two days i

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Clinton Dispatches Defense Secretary to Bolster Support Against Iraq

By BARRY SCHWEID

AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Clinton dispatched Defense Secretary William Perry to the Middle East this weekend to prop up allies' support for increased U.S. military pressure on Saddam Hussien.

As the United States sent 5,000 more Army troops to Kuwait and 18 more fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, the administration shrugged off Iraq's announcement it would not target U.S. and allied jets patrolling the skies over northern and southern Iraq to protect Kurds and Shiites below.

"We'll be looking at actions, not statements, from Baghdad," press secretary Mike McCurry said of the Iraqi announcement.

After a 90-minute meeting Friday between the president and his top national security advisers, the White House said Perry would hold high-level consultations in the region, with stops in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"The president would like him to go there to consult, to share his perspective with our partners and allies," said

David Johnson, spokesman for the National Security Council.

Johnson said Perry will underscore the U.S. belief that it is in the long-term interests of the United States and its allies to work together in facing the problem posed by Iraq.

He wouldn't say if Perry would be making additional stops.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia have been reluctant to let U.S. forces use bases in their countries as launching pads for attacks on Iraq. And France, another ally in the 1991 war against Iraq, has refused to help enforce a U.S. expansion of the Iraqi no-fly zone.

State Department officials, however, dispute there is any wavering in the alliance.

"We've had the unstinting support of Britain," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said, claiming also backing from much of the Arab world as well as France and other allies.

And yet, the diplomatic contacts are continuing. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott took up the Iraqi situation in Paris on Thursday with French, Russian and other European ministers.

Meanwhile, the showdown with Saddam picked up steam Friday as the Clinton administration added a new contingent of F-16 fighter jets and other weaponry to its arsenal in the Persian Gulf.

"We are going to keep Saddam Hussein guessing," Burns said.

"He'll just have to wonder what the United States has in store for him. ... The reality is he is not interested in negotiations and never has been."

The allies' overflights, expanded last week to the outskirts of Baghdad, have deprived the Iraqi president of control of much of the country's airspace. According to Burns, it has put him in a box, making him incapable of attacking Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, which Iraq attempted to annex in 1990.

Burns also chided Russia for asking the administration to seek the approval of the U.N. Security Council before taking further military action. "We've been disappointed the Russian government hasn't seen the importance of maintaining a very tough posture," Burns said.

While administration officials showed no disposition to seek a diplomatic settlement - and denying all the while there was enough wavering in the anti-Iraq coalition - Burns ticked off a number of tough preconditions.

They included compliance with U.N. resolutions, a suspension of aggression against Iraq's neighbors and Iraqi Shiites, and ending all targeting of U.S. and allied warplanes in the skies over Iraq. Three surface-to-air missiles were fired Thursday though no U.S. jets were in the area.

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^Americans Get Another Base for Warplanes in the Gulf<

^Eds: UPDATES with additional comment from Perry, his arrival in Bahrain.<

^AP Photo IRB101,102<

^By ADNAN MALIK=

^Associated Press Writer=

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) - U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said Sunday a fresh round of attacks on Iraq remained a possibility as he toured the region seeking additional support among American allies.

In the latest U.S. confrontation with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, the Americans have received limited backing from countries in the region, and Perry got some mixed news Sunday.

Bahrain agreed to host U.S. warplanes on this tiny island state just off the Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf News Agency reported. The brief report did not provide further details.

But in Kuwait, Perry was not able to obtain permission to deploy 5,000 additional U.S. troops in the country. U.S. officials had said previously that the troops were being sent from Fort Hood, Texas, but that operation was put on hold.

"I have not authorized that deployment order and will not until I get the authorization of the Kuwaiti government," Perry said just before leaving Kuwait for Bahrain.

Perry said he had sought permission from Kuwait's Emir Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, who said that the request would be discussed by Kuwait's Defense Committee.

Asked if a fresh round of strikes against Iraq were still possible, Perry said, "Yes, it is still a possibility."

Kuwait last week agreed to host a batch of U.S. F-117A stealth attack planes, a move that prompted harsh criticism from Iraq.

Before visiting Kuwait, the defense secretary was in Saudi Arabia, where some 5,000 U.S. military personnel are based. But the Saudis have not allowed the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

Meanwhile, Iraq's government-run newspapers sharply criticized the American military buildup.

"Imposing the no-fly zones in the north and south of our country is an aggressive act by any standard," the al-Thawra daily said.

"America does not have any ethics," the al-Jumhuriya newspaper added.

U.S. warplanes have continued to patrol Iraqi skies, testing Saddam Hussein's pledge to stop shooting at them. There have been no reports of shooting incidents since Thursday.

U.S. ships and planes were headed to the Middle East in a show of force, and members of a 1,200-strong American contingent already in Kuwait fired live artillery rounds Saturday in military exercises near the Iraqi border.

Iraqi troops were so close to the Kuwaiti border that the U.S. troops on the other side heard their artillery fire. The Iraqi troops apparently were conducting their own exercises.

Kuwait's government renewed its call Saturday for the overthrow of the Iraqi leader, whose 1990 invasion of Kuwait brought on the Gulf War.

"This crisis will never be over until Saddam goes," Information Minister Sheik Saud Nasser al-Sabah told a news conference in Kuwait City. "This cat-and-mouse game has to end."

U.S. President Clinton responded to the movement of Iraqi forces into a Kurdish safe haven in the north late last month by ordering several air attacks on missile batteries and extending a no-fly zone in southern Iraq.

Saddam ordered his forces Friday not to fire at U.S. and allied aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq. Iraq shot at least one missile at a U.S. military plane earlier in the week, missing it.

The United States promised retaliation for the attempt on its jet, but the rhetoric has cooled as U.S. forces have gathered.

"We have to wait and see what Saddam plans to do. ... He has a track record of saying one thing and doing another," said Rear Adm. Edward Moore Jr., commander of the task force whose flagship is the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson in the Persian Gulf.

The United States is bolstering its presence with eight F-117A stealth attack planes; 18 F-16C fighter jets; a second aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise; and two Patriot missile units.

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^BC-Iraq-Iran-Kurds

^Iranian Troops Shell Iraqi Mountains To Keep Rival Kurds Away<

^With BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^By SELCAN HACAOGU=

^Associated Press Writer=

QAL'AT DIZAH, Iraq (AP) _ As Baghdad-backed Kurdish faction prepared for a final strike on their Iranian-allied rivals, Iranian troops Sunday shelled mountains along their border with Iraq to discourage such an attack.

Smoke rose over the blue-gray Khele mountains, some 20 kilometer (12 miles) east of this town.

"We haven't suffered any casualties," said a guerrilla commander of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which is backed by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Tens of thousands of Kurds have fled their homes for the rugged hills of nearby Iran over the past two weeks after the KDP routed the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The KDP now controls virtually the whole of northern Iraq, with the remnants of the PUK backed into small enclaves or refugee camps abutting the Iranian border.

"If the refugees do not return in three days, we will push the PUK into Iran," Anwar Hacı Osman, the KDP commander, told The Associated Press here.

"Of course we will not harm the refugees," said another KDP commander, Sadiq Hidir, adding: "If they return, we are ready to welcome them _ until Wednesday."

Although most of the refugees returned to their homes after Saddam Hussein declared a general amnesty for all Kurds, there are still some 1,500 refugees in the Khele camp, 15 kilometers (nine miles) from Qal'at Dizah.

The KDP has some 6,000 fighters armed with AK-47 Kalashnikovs, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, mortars and heavy machine guns in the area.

In Kuy Sanjak, 60 kilometers (37 miles) west of Qal'at Dizah, hundreds of KDP fighters were heading toward the border in pickup trucks decorated with yellow flags _ the party color.

The exact number of PUK guerrillas in the mountains was not known. Top commanders of the vanquished PUK, including leader Jalal Talabani, reportedly crossed into Iran along with thousands of other Kurds.

Some PUK guerrillas deserted and joined the KDP.

"I have no faith in Talabani anymore, he is responsible for our disaster," said Serdar Kerim, a deserter. He, along with seven other former PUK fighters, sat across from Osman in his headquarters here.

Another deserter complained about the conditions at PUK camps.

"I have been starving for days, and they haven't paid for three months," said Cuat Ahmad. "Look, they (KDP) gave me cigarettes and food."

A PUK guerrilla earns some 600 Iraqi Dinars (dlrs 25) a month, 200 Iraqi Dinars (dlrs 8) more than a KDP fighter.

Osman put the number of PUK deserters at around 100 for the past week.

But he was cautious about them.

"We have to watch them for three months, we decide later to accept them or not," Osman said.

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ankara's contribution to analysis roundup on gulf war alliances:

Six years after the Gulf War, Turkey, appears to be another weak link in the Gulf Alliance chain.

The Islamic-led government had been concentrating on improving relations with Iraq and the rest of the Arab world when the U.S. attacked Iraq, and some members have since openly criticized the United States.

While it opened up its airbases to U.S. jets during the Gulf War it barred the allies from using its southern Incirlik airbase where some 50 allied jets patrol a no-fly zone over northern Iraq.

Justice Minister Sevkett Kazan, a close aide of the prime minister Necmettin Erbakan, criticized U.S. airstrikes on Baghdad earlier this month.

"U.S. attacks on Iraq are against international agreements. no country has the right to act in this way," he said.

Ankara believes that its six-year alliance has cost it over dlr 20 billion in much needed revenue from the loss of trade with Iraq and the shut down of an oil pipeline. It also says that the lack of authority in northern Iraq, perpetuated by the no-fly zone, has allowed its own autonomy-seeking Kurdish rebels to flourish in the area. The rebels stage hit-and-run attacks on Turkish targets from bases in northern Iraq.

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Warplanes Patrol, American Official Consults Allies

Eds: UPDATES with U.S. defense secretary visiting U.S. allies in the Gulf, deletes outdated material.

AP Photo IRB101,102

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - With more American forces converging on the Gulf, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry toured the region Sunday to rally support for possible military strikes against Iraq.

In the latest U.S. confrontation with Saddam Hussein, the Americans have received only limited support for their retaliation against Iraq's movements into Kurdish territory.

Perry arrived late Saturday in neighboring Saudi Arabia, home to about 5,000 U.S. military personnel. The Saudis have not allowed the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

Perry was expected later Sunday in Kuwait, which agreed to host a batch of U.S. F-117A stealth attack planes, a move that prompted harsh criticism from Iraq.

He also plans to visit Bahrain and Turkey.

U.S. warplanes, meanwhile, have continued to patrol Iraqi skies, testing Saddam Hussein's pledge to stop shooting at them. There have been no reports of shooting incidents since Thursday.

U.S. ships, planes and 5,000 troops were headed to the Middle East in a show of force, and members of a 1,200-strong American contingent already in Kuwait fired live artillery rounds Saturday in military exercises near the Iraqi border.

Iraqi troops were so close to the Kuwaiti border that the U.S. troops on the other side heard their artillery fire. The Iraqi troops apparently were conducting their own exercises.

Kuwait's government renewed its call Saturday for the overthrow of the Iraqi leader, whose 1990 invasion of Kuwait brought on the Gulf War.

"This crisis will never be over until Saddam goes," Information Minister Sheik Saud Nasser al-Sabah told a news conference in Kuwait City. "This cat-and-mouse game has to end."

U.S. President Clinton responded to the movement of Iraqi forces into a Kurdish safe haven in the north late last month by ordering several air attacks on missile batteries and extending a no-fly zone in southern Iraq.

Saddam ordered his forces Friday not to fire at U.S. and allied aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq, after Iraq shot at least one missile at a U.S. military plane earlier in the week, missing it.

The United States promised retaliation for the attempt on its jet, but the rhetoric has cooled as U.S. forces have gathered.

Iraq's state-run press heaped praise Saturday on Saddam's decision to suspend air attacks on U.S. warplanes, even though the Iraqi ruling council said it could resume firing at any time.

The cease-fire demonstrates "evidence of Iraq's concern to avoid tension and its belief that dialogue is the only way to solve problems," the newspaper al-Jumhuriya declared Saturday.

"We have to wait and see what Saddam plans to do. ... He has a track record of saying one thing and doing another," said Rear Adm. Edward Moore Jr., commander of the task force whose flagship is the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson in the Persian Gulf.

In Iraq, Saddam gathered his top military leaders to discuss "ways of combating" any air strikes against Baghdad, the state Iraqi News Agency reported.

They discussed deployment of Iraq's surface-to-air missile force and "developing means of confrontation against any possible future action."

About 5,000 American soldiers were headed to Kuwait from Texas. The United States also is bolstering its presence with eight F-117A stealth attack planes; 18 F-16C fighter jets; a second aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise; and two Patriot missile units.

BC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld-Writethru,0650

U.S. Warplanes Patrol Iraqi Skies, U.S. Official Consults Allies
Eds: LEADS throughout to UPDATE with U.S. defense secretary saying
Kuwait has not yet approved deployment of additional U.S. troops,
DELETES outdated material. No pickup.

AP Photo IRB101-102

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - With American forces converging on the
Gulf, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry toured the region Sunday
seeking support for possible military strikes against Iraq.

In the latest U.S. confrontation with Iraqi leader Saddam
Hussein, the Americans have received limited backing from countries
in the region, and Perry got a bit of mixed news Sunday.

Bahrain has agreed to host U.S. warplanes in the tiny island
state just off the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf News
Agency reported. The brief report did not provide further details.
Perry was headed to Bahrain later Sunday.

But in Kuwait, Perry was not immediately able to obtain
permission to deploy 5,000 additional U.S. troops in the country.
U.S. officials had said that the troops were being sent from Fort
Hood, Texas, but that operation was put on hold.

"I have not authorized that deployment order and will not until
I get the authorization of the Kuwaiti government," Perry said
just before leaving Kuwait for Bahrain.

Perry said he had sought permission from Kuwait's Emir Sheik
Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, who said that the request would be
discussed by Kuwait's Defense Committee.

Kuwait last week agreed to host a batch of U.S. F-117A stealth
attack planes, a move that prompted harsh criticism from Iraq.

U.S. President Bill Clinton responded to the movement of Iraqi
forces into a Kurdish safe haven in the north late last month by
ordering several air attacks on missile batteries and extending a
no-fly zone in southern Iraq.

Before visiting Kuwait, Perry was in Saudi Arabia. Some 5,000
U.S. military personnel are based in the kingdom. The Saudis have
not allowed the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from
their territory.

Meanwhile, Iraq's government-run newspapers sharply criticized
the American military buildup.

"Imposing the no-fly zones in the north and south of our
country is an aggressive act by any standard," the al-Thawra daily
said.

"America does not have any ethics," the al-Jumhuriya newspaper
added.

Saddam ordered his forces Friday not to fire at U.S. and allied
aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones over northern and southern
Iraq. Iraq shot at least one missile at a U.S. military plane
earlier in the week, missing it. There have been no reports of
shooting incidents since Thursday.

The United States promised retaliation, but the rhetoric has
cooled as U.S. forces have gathered.

"We have to wait and see what Saddam plans to do. ... He has a
track record of saying one thing and doing another," said Rear
Adm. Edward Moore Jr., commander of the task force whose flagship,
the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, is in the Gulf.

U.S. ships and planes were headed to the Middle East in a show
of force, and members of a 1,200-member American contingent already
in Kuwait fired live artillery rounds Saturday in military
exercises near the Iraqi border.

Iraqi troops were so close to the Kuwaiti border that the U.S.
troops on the other side heard their artillery fire. The Iraqi
troops were apparently conducting their own exercises.

Kuwait's government renewed its call Saturday for the overthrow
of the Iraqi leader, whose 1990 invasion of Kuwait brought on the
Gulf War.

The United States is bolstering its presence with eight F-117A
stealth attack planes; 18 F-16C fighter jets; a second aircraft
carrier, the USS Enterprise; and two Patriot missile units.

BC-Iraq-Turkey-Refugees

With BC-Iraq-Kurds

Hundreds of Kurds Who Worked for U.S. Aid Groups Leave Iraq

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

ZAHKO, Iraq (AP) - Hundreds of Kurds who worked for U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq safely left the country and crossed into Turkey on Sunday, with many more were expected to follow soon.

Carrying small children, suitcases, and duffel bags, the Kurds walked across the bridge separating northern Iraq and Turkey en route to a refugee camp nearby.

At least 500 Iraqi Kurds crossed the border, including pregnant women. Another 2,000 Kurds with connections to U.S. aid groups were expected leave northern Iraq in the next few days, officials said.

Their final destination was not announced, but many want to go to the United States.

The area was guarded by soldiers in armored personnel carriers, and the refugees were met by the Turkish Red Crescent and members of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

After they entered Turkey, the refugees were questioned by Turkish and U.S. authorities in five tents set up on a soccer field.

Turkish officials at the border said they believed the refugees would be put on buses to the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir. They said the refugees might be sent onward to the United States, but no American officials were immediately available to confirm this account.

The regional governor on the Turkish side, Necati Bilican, said it could take three to five days for all the refugees to leave northern Iraq.

In a separate development, four aid workers from northern Iraq remained in the custody of Iranian authorities on Sunday, a U.N. official said.

The four were apparently picked up Friday when they visited a refugee camp in northeast Iraq controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the group that was defeated in recent fighting in the region. The four were handed over to Iranian authorities, according to the U.N.

"They are in Iran and they will be released," U.N. official Paul Dahl said. "They were in good condition, but we have not received any information from the Iranian authorities so far."

The four have been identified as Guillaume Woehling of Pharmacists Without Borders; Pierre Vinet of the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for refugees; an Iraqi member of the group's local team described only as Dr. Ibrahim, and an unidentified chauffeur.

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[Cyprus]

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EC-Iraq-Kurds, 4th Ld-Writethru

Precede BAGHDAD

Americans Get Another Base for Warplanes in the Gulf

Eds: UPDATES with additional comment from Perry, his arrival in

Bahrain, CHANGES byline

AP Photos IRB101,102

By ADNAN MALIK

Associated Press Writer

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) - A fresh round of American attacks on Iraq remain a possibility, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said Sunday as he toured the region seeking additional support among American allies.

In the latest U.S. confrontation with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, the Americans have received limited backing from countries in the region, and Perry got some mixed news Sunday.

Bahrain agreed to host U.S. warplanes on this tiny island state just off the Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf News Agency reported. The brief report did not provide further details.

But in Kuwait, Perry was not able to obtain permission to deploy 5,000 additional U.S. troops in the country. U.S. officials had said previously that the troops were being sent from Fort Hood, Texas, but that operation was put on hold.

"I have not authorized that deployment order and will not until I get the authorization of the Kuwaiti government," Perry said just before leaving Kuwait for Bahrain.

Perry said he had sought permission from Kuwait's Emir Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, who said that the request would be discussed by Kuwait's Defense Committee.

Asked if a fresh round of strikes against Iraq were still possible, Perry said, "Yes, it is still a possibility."

Kuwait last week agreed to host a group of American F-117A stealth attack planes, a move that prompted harsh criticism from Iraq.

Before visiting Kuwait, the defense secretary was in Saudi Arabia, where some 5,000 U.S. military personnel are based. But the Saudis have not allowed the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

Meanwhile, Iraq's government-run newspapers sharply criticized the American military buildup.

"Imposing the no-fly zones in the north and south of our country is an aggressive act by any standard," the al-Thawra daily said.

"America does not have any ethics," the al-Jumhuriya newspaper added.

U.S. warplanes have continued to patrol Iraqi skies, testing Saddam Hussein's pledge to stop shooting at them. There have been no reports of shooting incidents since Thursday.

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"This crisis will never be over until Saddam goes," Information Minister Sheik Saud Nasser al-Sabah told a news conference in Kuwait City. "This cat-and-mouse game has to end."

U.S. President Clinton responded to the movement of Iraqi forces into a Kurdish safe haven in the north late last month by ordering several air attacks on missile batteries and extending a no-fly zone in southern Iraq.

The United States is bolstering its presence with eight F-117A stealth attack planes; 18 F-16C fighter jets; a second aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, and two Patriot missile units.

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey-Refugees, 2nd Ld-Writethru

^Kurds Who Worked With U.S. Aid Groups Leave Iraq<

^Eds: AMs. UPDATES with more quotes, color in grafs 9-12, CORRECTS spelling of Zakhu dateline to conform with style.<

^With BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) _ Hundreds of Kurds who worked for U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq safely left the country and crossed into Turkey on Sunday. Many more were expected to follow soon.

Carrying small children, suitcases, and duffel bags, the Kurds walked across the bridge separating northern Iraq and Turkey en route to a refugee camp nearby.

At least 500 Iraqi Kurds crossed the border, including pregnant women. Another 2,000 Kurds with connections to U.S. aid groups were expected leave northern Iraq in the next few days, officials said.

Their final destination was not announced, but many want to go to the United States.

The area was guarded by soldiers in armored personnel carriers, and the refugees were met by the Turkish Red Crescent and members of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

After they entered Turkey, the refugees were questioned by Turkish and U.S. authorities in five tents set up on a soccer field.

Turkish officials at the border said they believed the refugees would be put on buses to the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir. They said the refugees might be sent onward to the United States, but no American officials were immediately available to confirm this account.

The regional governor on the Turkish side, Necati Bilican, said it could take three to five days for all the refugees to leave northern Iraq.

The first group that arrived in a Turkish refugee camp was resting, sitting under white canvas tents. They were provided with loaves of bread and bottled water.

The prevailing moods were sadness and melancholy.

Asked how he felt, refugee Shazad Hamit Abdullah said he was sad "because I left my country."

One young boy looked up and asked: "Are there Muslims in America?"

In a separate development, four aid workers from northern Iraq remained in the custody of Iranian authorities on Sunday, a U.N. official said.

The four apparently were picked up Friday when they visited a refugee camp in northeast Iraq controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the group that was defeated in recent fighting in the region. The four were handed over to Iranian authorities, according to the U.N.

"They are in Iran and they will be released," said U.N. official Paul Dahl. "They were in good condition, but we have not received any information from the Iranian authorities so far."

The four have been identified as Frenchman Guillaume Woehling of Pharmacists Without Borders; an Iraqi member of the group's local team described only as Dr. Ibrahim; Canadian Pierre Vinet of the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for refugees; and an unidentified chauffeur.

^(bm-gm-mdm)<

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey-Refugees,0398<

^Kurds Who Worked With U.S. Aid Groups To Go To Guam<

^Eds: INCORPORATES Turkey-Iraq-Refugees.<

^With Iraq-Kurds<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) _ About 500 Kurds who worked for U.S. aid group in northern Iraq and fled fearing reprisals will fly to the U.S. Pacific island of Guam on Monday, a U.S. embassy official said.

The refugees, including pregnant women, crossed the border into Turkey on Sunday, and more were expected to follow Monday.

About 2,000 Kurds with connections to U.S. aid groups were expected to leave northern Iraq in the next few days, officials said.

Francis Ricciardone, the U.S. embassy's chief of mission in Turkey, told reporters in the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir that the Iraqi Kurds would be flown to Guam by noon Monday.

"They will stay at the island for about two, three months before (being) taken to the United States," he said. Many of the refugees want sanctuary in the United States.

Guam is a possession of the United States in the western Pacific. It has large, secure, remote U.S. military complexes where Kurds who had opposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein while working for U.S. agencies in northern Iraq could be safely debriefed.

Their evacuation came as a result of the turmoil in northern Iraq, where a Kurdish group made an alliance with Saddam and took control of the area after routing a rival group. The United States staged missile strikes to retaliate against Saddam's incursion.

Carrying small children, suitcases, and duffel bags, the Kurds on Sunday walked across the bridge separating northern Iraq and Turkey en route to a refugee camp nearby.

The area was guarded by soldiers in armored personnel carriers, and the refugees were met by the Turkish Red Crescent and members of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

After entering Turkey, the refugees were questioned by Turkish and U.S. authorities in tents set up on a soccer field.

Turkey allowed their crossing after receiving assurances from the United States that their stay in the country would be limited.

Turkey had concerns that Turkish Kurdish guerrillas fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey from their bases in northern Iraq would infiltrate the refugee group.

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^EC-Iraq-Kurds-captives<

^Iran Said To Free Northern Iraq Aid Workers<

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Four aid workers from northern Iraq detained over the weekend by Iranian authorities were released Monday, U.N. official Bent Blankesteiner said.

The four were picked up Friday during their visit to a refugee camp in northeast Iraq controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and handed over to Iranian authorities.

The Iran-backed PUK was routed by the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Union in fighting which erupted Aug. 31.

The four were identified as Frenchman Guillaume Woehling of Pharmacists Without Borders; an Iraqi member of the group's local team described only as Dr. Ibrahim; Canadian Pierre Vinet of the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and an unidentified driver.

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^Precede MANAMA<

^U.S. Official in Turkey To Coordinate Anti-Saddam Stance<

^Eds: UPDATES with U.S. defense secretary in Turkey, Kurdish refugees to be flown to Guam, minor editing throughout.<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ With America's allies reluctant to back th U.S. in its confrontation with Iraq, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry pressed ahead with his tour of the region trying to build support for an expanded U.S. presence.

Perry said Sunday that another round of attacks on Iraq remained a possibility. But the U.S.-Iraq rhetoric has cooled down in recent days and renewed strikes are by no means certain.

Perry arrived in Turkey from Bahrain, where he was able to claim a success. The small island nation agreed to host U.S. warplanes in the Gulf.

Already home to a U.S. Navy base, Bahrain will allow 23 F-16s to be based on its territory to help enforce a "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq, where U.S. warplanes have been patrolling since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

But at an earlier stop in Kuwait, Perry was unable to get permission to deploy 3,000 additional U.S. troops in the emirate that Iraq invaded in 1990, touching off the Gulf War.

"I have not authorized that deployment order and will not until I get the authorization of the Kuwaiti government," Perry said just before leaving Kuwait.

The Americans already have a 1,200-strong contingent in Kuwait conducting military exercises with Kuwaiti soldiers near the Iraqi border.

Kuwait last week agreed to allow U.S. F-117A stealth attack planes to operate from its soil, a decision which prompted harsh criticism from Iraq.

Perry was due to meet in Ankara with President Suleyman Demirel and Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller.

It was not immediately clear whether Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who heads a new Islamic-led government, would be back in the Turkish capital from a weekend break in time to meet Perry.

Turkey, a NATO member and a key partner in the U.S.-led alliance that fought Iraq in the Gulf War, has signaled its reluctance to join a new coalition against Iraq.

Turkey has barred the use of its southern air base in Incirlik for the launching of any air strikes against Iraq. The base provides a temporary home for some 50 jets of a U.S.-led allied force enforcing a "no fly" zone over northern Iraq.

Addressing a news conference after meeting with Bahrain's leader on Sunday, Perry said fresh U.S. attacks on Iraq remained an option.

U.S. President Clinton responded to the movement of Iraqi forces into a Kurdish safe haven in the north late last month by launching air attacks on missile batteries Sept. 3 and 4 and extending a no-fly zone in southern Iraq.

Iraq said Friday that it would cease firing at allied warplanes if they stopped patrolling Iraqi skies.

There have been no reported Iraqi attacks since Thursday, although the allied patrols continue.

"We will not tolerate threats to our air crews and anything that Iraq does to threaten our air crews will meet with a very strong response," Perry said Sunday.

Before Kuwait, Perry stopped in Saudi Arabia, where about 5,000 U.S. military personnel are based. The Saudis have not permitted the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

A senior diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Turkey, meanwhile, said that about 500 Kurds who worked for U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq but fled the area for fear of reprisals by Saddam's army will be flown to the Pacific island of Guam on Monday.

The Kurds will remain on the U.S. territory for two to three months before going to the United States, the diplomat, Francis Ricciardone, told reporters Monday.

Another 2,000 Kurds afraid of reprisals from Saddam because of their connections to the U.S. groups were expected to leave Iraq for Turkey in the next few days.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru<,0702<

^U.S. Official Leaves Turkey, Gains Limited Backing For Iraq Buildup<

^Eds: New throughout to UPDATE with U.S. defense secretary leaving Turkey, ADDS comments from Turkish foreign minister and Kuwait on U.S. troops in the emirate. No pickup. ADDS photo.<

^AP Photo DVB101<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry left Turkey on Monday after winning only limited backing for the American military buildup against Iraq.

Perry says further attacks on Iraqi military sites remain possible. But with American allies reluctant to endorse renewed warfare, the U.S. rhetoric toward Iraq has cooled in recent days and new air strikes are by no means certain.

In Turkey, Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Perry had not asked to use the southern Incirlik air base to strike at Iraqi targets.

But "even if there had been (a request), it would not have been possible for us to meet this request," Mrs. Ciller told reporters after the meeting. "That would not be the correct move from the point of view of our own interests."

The Americans and their allies have used the Incirlik base to patrol the "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq for the past five years. But Turkey no longer has much enthusiasm for the operation and has continued to cooperate only in response to American pressure.

Perry did not speak to reporters before leaving Turkey, the last stop on a four-nation trip to the region.

In another development, Kuwait's emir thanked the United States for its military support. But in a vague statement he did not make clear whether Kuwait had approved a U.S. request to send an additional 3,000 troops to the country.

"Kuwait is thankful and grateful for the positive U.S. stance represented by the dispatch of its forces to safeguard the security and sovereignty of Kuwait," the emir, Sheik Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, was quoted as saying by the official Kuwait News Agency.

The Americans already have 1,200 ground troops training in the Kuwaiti desert as well as eight F-117A stealth attack planes that arrived last week.

It was not clear whether the emir was referring to U.S. forces already in Kuwait, or to the additional troops requested by Perry when they met Sunday.

Perry was able to claim one success during his visit Sunday to Bahrain. The small island-nation agreed to join Kuwait in hosting U.S. warplanes in the Gulf.

Already home to a U.S. Navy base, Bahrain will allow at least 23 F-16s to be based on its territory to help enforce the newly expanded no-fly zone over southern Iraq.

Addressing a news conference after meeting with Bahrain's leader on Sunday, Perry said fresh U.S. attacks on Iraq remained an option. Washington launched cruise missile attacks on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

The attacks were to punish Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein for his army's incursion into a Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.

Iraq said Friday that it would cease firing at allied warplanes if they stopped patrolling Iraqi skies.

There have been no reported Iraqi attacks since Thursday, although the patrols continue.

"We will not tolerate threats to our air crews and anything that Iraq does to threaten our air crews will meet with a very strong response," Perry said Sunday.

Perry also visited Saudi Arabia, where about 5,000 U.S. military personnel are based. The Saudis have not permitted the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Turkey said that about 500 Kurds affiliated with U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq would be flown to the Pacific island of Guam on Monday.

The Kurds left Iraq and crossed into Turkey on Sunday. They will remain in the U.S. territory for up to three months before going to the United States, American diplomat Francis Ricciardone told reporters.

Another 2,000 Kurds afraid of reprisals from Iraqi forces because of their connections to the U.S. groups were expected to leave Iraq for Turkey within days.

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey-Refugees, 1st Ld-Writethru<

^Eds: UPDATES number of refugees in Turkey, details.<

^With BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) _ As many as 2,100 Kurds who fear reprisals for their work with U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq have fled to Turkey for airlift to the U.S. Pacific island of Guam on Monday, Turkey's Anatolia News Agency said.

Francis Ricciardone, the U.S. embassy's chief of mission in Turkey, told reporters in the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir that the Iraqi Kurds would begin being flown to Guam on Monday.

"They will stay at the island for about two, three months before (being) taken to the United States," he said. Many of the refugees want sanctuary in the United States.

The Turkish state-guided Anatolia agency said the refugees were being bused from the border area to Diyarbakir, a staging area for their flight to Guam, a possession of the United States in the western Pacific.

Guam has large, secure, remote U.S. military complexes where Kurds who had opposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein while working for U.S. agencies in northern Iraq can be safely debriefed.

Their evacuation came as a result of the turmoil in northern Iraq, where a Kurdish group made an alliance with Saddam and took control of the area after routing a rival group. The U.S. staged missile strikes to retaliate against Saddam's incursion.

Carrying small children, suitcases, and duffel bags, the first refugees, including pregnant women, on Sunday began walking across the bridge separating northern Iraq and Turkey en route to a refugee camp nearby.

Plans were for them to depart for Guam on Sunday, but they were forced to spend the night at a university campus due to a technical fault found on their aircraft, Anatolia said.

After entering Turkey, the refugees were met by the Turkish Red Crescent and members of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

They also were questioned by Turkish and U.S. authorities in tents set up on a soccer field in an area guarded by soldiers in armored personnel carriers.

Turkey allowed their crossing after receiving U.S. assurances their stay in the country would be limited.

Turkey had concerns that Turkish Kurdish guerrillas fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey from their bases in northern Iraq would infiltrate the refugee group.

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey-Refugees, 2nd Ld-Writethru

^Eds: UPDATES with first flights taking off for Guam.<

^With BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^By BRIAN MURPHY=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) _ A first group of 600 Kurds who fear reprisals for their work with U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq left Turkey en route to the American pacific island of Guam, Turkey's Anatolia News Agency said.

It said another 1,475 Kurds had crossed into Turkey for possible later airlift to Guam from the airport at the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir.

Francis Ricciardone, the U.S. embassy's chief of mission in Turkey, told reporters in the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir that the Iraqi Kurds would "at the island for about two, three months before (being) taken to the United States."

Many of the refugees want sanctuary in the United States.

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Turkey allowed their crossing after receiving U.S. assurances their stay in the country would be limited.

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^(bm-tm-mdm)<

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^BC-US-Iraq, 6th Ld-Writethru

^U.S. Gets OK From Kuwait On Troop Deployment<

^Eds: Corrects number of F16s to 23, edits to tighten<

^By JIM ABRAMS=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ After an embarrassing delay for the United States, the government of Kuwait has agreed to allow additional American troops to be stationed on its territory, the White House said Monday.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry reported Kuwait's decision at a morning briefing with reporters but declined to say how many troops would be sent to Kuwait.

"We can confirm that the government of Kuwait is to station our troops there," McCurry said. "I'm not discussing numbers."

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary William Perry left Turkey Monday after winning only limited backing for the American military buildup against Iraq.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller of Turkey said Perry had not asked to use the southern Incirlik air base to strike at Iraqi targets. But "even if there had been (a request), it would not have been possible for us to meet this request," she told reporters. "That would not be the correct move from the point of view of our own interests."

The Kuwaitis had delayed approval of the additional troops over the weekend and in a vaguely worded statement Monday had not confirmed approval for the new forces.

President Clinton's national security advisers are working to arrange a meeting with congressional leaders Tuesday morning, McCurry said. The meeting would be purely for information, he said, not for seeking congressional consent for further military action.

Critics of the Clinton administration's response to Iraq's latest military moves pointed to Kuwait's delay in approving the deployment as an example of the failure to pull together the coalition that drove Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait in 1991.

In an interview Sunday broadcast Monday on ABC television, Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole said, "I'm not certain what the policy is in Iraq. I think now he needs to define more precisely what our goal is, what we intend to do, why we are there, why we are spending money there, why we talk about sending 5,000 troops."

It was announced Friday that 5,000 troops from Fort Hood, Texas, were preparing to go to Kuwait _ a number the Pentagon said Sunday was overstated and should have been 3,000 _ as part of efforts to bolster U.S. forces in the region. But Defense Secretary William Perry, during a Sunday visit to Kuwait, was told that permission for the troops would have to await approval by the emirate's defense committee.

"I think the story broke in the papers before Secretary Perry had the chance to come and discuss that with them," Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Sunday on ABC TV.

Clinton said Sunday the planned Kuwaiti deployment was announced "before we had done our regular consultation and the Kuwaitis had done their regular review. As far as I know, there is nothing irregular or troubling here."

The administration said Kuwait's acceptance of eight F-117 stealth fighters and Bahrain's hosting of 23 American F-16 fighters were proof of Mideast cooperation in the campaign against Saddam.

Sen. Sam Nunn, ranking minority member of the Senate Armed Services committee, said Monday that while he agrees with the buildup of forces at the moment, "we need to start looking at long-term policy."

"We're having to react to every tactical move than Saddam makes," Nunn said on NBC TV.

"We ought to encourage the Gulf states to get with Egypt and Jordan, who have ample manpower, to help with the financing and to get an Arab front line defense so we can be the residual defense. For us to have to respond across thousands of miles every time Saddam moves his troops in Iraq doesn't make much sense in the long haul," he said.

Republicans, and some Democrats, have criticized the administration for failing to win the support and participation of its Gulf War coalition partners before striking back at Saddam for his incursion into protected Kurdish territory.

France has spoken out against the U.S. retaliation, and Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan have refused to allow air strikes to be launched from their territory.

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^Perry Heads Home After Lukewarm Reception<

^Eds: AMS, RECASTS and UPDATES with Kuwait allowing additional American troops, comment from Kuwait.<

^AP Photo DYB101<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Before U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry began his trip to the Middle East, he said the Americans were preparing a "disproportionate" response to Saddam Hussein's provocations.

After several lukewarm receptions by American allies, the prospect of renewed air strikes on Iraq had been downgraded to a "possibility."

Perry headed home Monday after a tough trip to the region, where he found only limited backing for the U.S. military buildup against Iraq.

The small Gulf states of Bahrain and Kuwait agreed to host U.S. troops and planes. But Saudi Arabia and Turkey, two of the most important American allies in the region, don't want their territory used for strikes against Iraq.

While Perry may not have received the ringing endorsements he had sought, he left a region Monday that was less tense than when he arrived Saturday.

Iraq has also toned down its rhetoric and there have been no reported firings on U.S. planes patrolling the "no-fly zones" over northern and southern Iraq in recent days.

The U.S. defense secretary received some good news Monday when Kuwait agreed to allow additional American ground troops to be stationed on its territory.

"Kuwait is thankful and grateful for the positive U.S. stance represented by the dispatch of its forces to safeguard the security and sovereignty of Kuwait," said Kuwait's emir, Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah.

The emir did not give immediate approval when Perry made the request Sunday. But Kuwait said the request simply had to go through the proper channels.

"There are constitutional institutions in Kuwait that have to be consulted before such decisions are taken," Information Minister Sheik Saud Nasser al-Sabah told a news conference.

The Pentagon declined to say how many soldiers would be sent. Earlier the Pentagon had spoken of airlifting 3,000 soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas.

The Americans already have 1,200 ground troops training in the Kuwaiti desert as well as eight F-117A stealth attack planes that arrived last week.

Washington launched cruise missile attacks on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4 to punish Saddam for his army's incursion into a Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.

Iraq responded by firing missiles at U.S. planes in the "no-fly zones" last week. But there have been no incidents since Iraq said Friday it would cease firing at allied warplanes — if they stopped patrolling Iraqi skies. The patrols continue.

Several major Arab countries that were part of the Gulf War coalition against Iraq have been less than supportive of the U.S. buildup, including Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

In Turkey, Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Perry had not asked to use the southern Incirlik air base to strike at Iraqi targets.

But "even if there had been (a request), it would not have been possible for us to meet this," Mrs. Ciller told reporters after the meeting. "That would not be the correct move from the point of view of our own interests."

The Americans and their allies have used the Incirlik base to patrol the "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq for the past five years. But Turkey no longer has much enthusiasm for the operation and has continued to cooperate only in response to American pressure.

Perry, meanwhile, was able to claim success during his visit Sunday to Bahrain. The small island nation agreed to allow 23 F-16s to be based on its territory to help enforce the newly expanded no-fly zone over southern Iraq.

Perry also visited Saudi Arabia, where about 5,000 U.S. military personnel are based. But the Saudis have not permitted the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

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^Iran Said To Free Northern Iraq Aid Workers<
^Eds: UPDATES with arrival in Irbil.<

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Four aid workers from northern Iraq detained over the weekend by Iranian authorities were released Monday and brought to this city.

"They are physically in good condition," said Paul Dahl, the chief of the U.N. guards contingent in northern Iraq, who brought the four here from the Iranian border.

The four were picked up Friday during their visit to a refugee camp in northeast Iraq controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and handed over to Iranian authorities.

The Iran-backed PUK was routed by the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Union in fighting that erupted Aug. 31.

The four were identified as Frenchman Guillaume Woehling of Pharmacists Without Borders; an Iraqi member of the group's local team described only as Dr. Ibrahim; Canadian Pierre Vinet of the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and an unidentified driver.

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^Perry Heads Home After Lukewarm Reception<

^Eds: INSERTS three grafs 5-7 with analysis<

^AP Photo DYR101<

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^Associated Press Writer=

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The small Gulf states of Bahrain and Kuwait agreed to host U.S. troops and planes. But Saudi Arabia and Turkey, two of the most important American allies in the region, don't want their territory used for strikes against Iraq.

Many Arabs governments, and even more so their news media, have portrayed the recent U.S. actions against Iraq as heavy-handed. There is also a perception that the United States is intruding in the internal affairs of Iraq _ an internal civil war between one Kurdish faction and another, even if one of them is backed by Baghdad.

The support from Kuwait, the most stridently anti-Iraqi country in the Gulf since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, was expected _ although the delay in granting permission for U.S. troops to deploy may reflected a desire by the emirate to make sure it wasn't being taken for granted.

It was less clear why Bahrain acceded to a U.S. request to base warplanes in the tiny island emirate. Bahrain usually takes its political cues from Saudi Arabia, which has refused to allow its soil to be used to launch attacks against Iraq.

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*792 Kurds, Fearing Reprisals, Depart For Guam(

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Changes attribution to U.S. State Department; minor editing.(

*With Iraq-Kurds(

*By BRIAN MURPHY=

*Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) _ A first group of 792 Kurdish refugees, fearing reprisals for their ties to U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq, flew out of Turkey on Monday, headed for the American island of Guam and a new life in the United States.

Another 1,422 Kurds were to be flown to Guam's Anderson Air Force Base aboard five charter flights in the next few days. The airlift, from the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir, was expected to be concluded by Thursday, the U.S. State Department said.

Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the United States felt an obligation to the refugees, since Iraqi President Saddam Hussein might "inflict punishment" because of their work for U.S. aid agencies.

Francis Ricciardone, the U.S. Embassy's chief of mission in Turkey, told reporters in Diyarbakir that the Iraqi Kurds would stay on Guam, a U.S. possession in the western Pacific, for two or three months before going to the United States.

The evacuations follow the turmoil in northern Iraq, where a Kurdish group made an alliance with Saddam and took control of the area after routing a rival group. The U.S. staged missile strikes to retaliate against Saddam's incursion.

Most of the refugees want sanctuary in the United States, and the vast majority are expected to be resettled there, Burns said. He said the U.S. government will try to find American sponsors for each family.

Guam has large, secure, remote U.S. military complexes where the Kurds, who opposed Saddam while working for U.S. aid agencies, can be safely interviewed.

Carrying small children, suitcases, and duffel bags, the first refugees, including pregnant women, began walking Sunday across the bridge separating northern Iraq and Turkey, headed to a refugee camp nearby.

They had initially planned to depart for Guam on Sunday, but were forced to spend the night at a university campus because of problems on their aircraft, Turkey's Anatolia News Agency said.

After entering Turkey, the refugees were questioned by Turkish and U.S. authorities in tents set up on a soccer field in an area guarded by soldiers in armored personnel carriers.

Turkey allowed them to cross the border after receiving U.S. assurances their stay in the country would be limited.

Turkey had concerns that Turkish Kurdish guerrillas fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey from their bases in northern Iraq might infiltrate the refugee group.

Also Monday, four aid workers from northern Iraq detained over the weekend by Iranian authorities were released in good condition and brought to Irbil.

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*BC-Turkey-US, 1st Ld-Writethru,0547<

*Hard Times Between Once Close Allies Turkey and US<

*Eds: ADDS two grafs at end with Clinton administration official saying he is unaware of a request for a meeting between Clinton-Ciller. Fixes typo in "U.N. General Assembly" in 14th graf.<

*By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

*Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ When U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry visited Turkey Monday, his brief stopover underlined the coolness that now marks relations between the once close allies.

Only five minutes after Perry's plane took off for London after a quick round of talks with Turkish officials, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's private jet landed.

Erbakan, who heads the first Islamic-led government in the history of the Turkish republic and has been known for his anti-American rhetoric, had informed U.S. officials he would not interrupt his weekend to see Perry. If Perry waited for his return, the prime minister said, he was available.

Erbakan, who has been concentrating on improving relations with Iraq and the Arab world, has remained silent about Washington's latest confrontation with Iraq.

But he has made enough gestures to display his disapproval of U.S. policy.

He has let his close aides openly criticize the United States and did not hesitate to attend prayers at his party's mosque and hear the United States be condemned for the air strikes against Iraq.

"America and its allies violate the rights of other nations in a display of force," Muhittin Yildirim, the mosque's imam, preached in the sermon. "All faithful must use all their means to stand against it (the United States)."

Aware of Ankara's new position after Erbakan's assumed power in June, Washington never asked to use a Turkish airbase as a staging point for attacks against Iraq. The Incirlik base was used for attacks during the Gulf War, when Turkey was a key member of the alliance against Iraq. About 2,000 U.S. troops are based there.

Some analysts questioned why Perry included Ankara in his tour to bolster support at a time of a U.S. military buildup against Iraq in the region.

Sedat Ergin, a columnist for the daily Hurriyet, said Washington's position was not to alienate Turkey as a "friendly ally" but also to keep its distance from Erbakan.

He added that Erbakan's snub of Perry would further strengthen Washington's position.

Mrs. Ciller, Erbakan's pro-Western coalition partner and the former prime minister, negotiated with Washington over issues related to the latest Iraqi crisis, such as the evacuation of the U.S.-backed Iraqi Kurdish aid workers through Turkey.

But Ciller also may pay a price for having struck a deal with Erbakan.

Her request to meet with President Clinton when she goes to New York this month to attend the opening of the U.N. General Assembly session has been turned down, according to Turkish newspapers.

In Washington, a Clinton administration official said he was unaware of a Turkish request for a meeting with Ciller, but noted Clinton will be in New York for just a few hours Monday.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher is expected to meet with Ciller later next week.

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^Eds: UP&PU L N Kuwaiti foreign minister

[Almaty]

APW VV 32 Aa a---- Iran Frees Northern Iraq Aid Workers 09-16 10:55p

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Iran Frees Northern Iraq Aid Workers

Eds: UPDATES with Iraq protesting about activities of a Danish U.N. guard last month.

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Four aid workers from northern Iraq detained over the weekend by Iranian authorities were released Monday and brought to this city.

"They are physically in good condition," said Paul Dahl, the chief of the U.N. guards contingent in northern Iraq, who brought the four here from the Iranian border.

The four were picked up Friday during their visit to a refugee camp in northeast Iraq controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and handed over to Iranian authorities.

The Iran-backed PUK was routed by the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Union in fighting that erupted Aug. 31.

The four were identified as Frenchman Guillaume Woehling of Pharmacists Without Borders; an Iraqi member of the group's local team described only as Dr. Ibrahim; Canadian Pierre Vinet of the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and an unidentified driver.

In another development, Iraq said late Monday it was sending a formal protest to the United Nations concerning the behavior of a Danish U.N. guard caught trying to

"smuggle" Iraqi military uniforms into northern Iraq on Aug. 24.

The guard has been declared "persona non grata" in Iraq, the Iraqi News Agency said.

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[Kurdsl]

APW VVV77 Aa ----- Kurds Who Worked With U.S. Aid Groups L 09-15 7:32p

BC-Iraq-Turkey-Refugees, 1st Ld-Writethru

Kurds Who Worked With U.S. Aid Groups Leave Iraq

Eds: CORRECTS spelling of Zakhu dateline to conform with style,
UPDATES with quotes, color grafs 9-12

With BC-Iraq-Kurds

By BRIAN MURPHY

Associated Press Writer

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) - Hundreds of Kurds who worked for U.S. aid groups in northern Iraq safely left the country and crossed into Turkey on Sunday, with many more expected to follow soon.

Carrying small children, suitcases, and duffel bags, the Kurds walked across the bridge separating northern Iraq and Turkey en route to a refugee camp nearby.

At least 500 Iraqi Kurds crossed the border, including pregnant women. Another 2,000 Kurds with connections to U.S. aid groups were expected leave northern Iraq in the next few days, officials said.

Their final destination was not announced, but many want to go to the United States.

The area was guarded by soldiers in armored personnel carriers, and the refugees were met by the Turkish Red Crescent and members of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

After they entered Turkey, the refugees were questioned by Turkish and U.S. authorities in five tents set up on a soccer field.

Turkish officials at the border said they believed the refugees would be put on buses to the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir. They said the refugees might be sent onward to the United States, but no American officials were immediately available to confirm this account.

The regional governor on the Turkish side, Necati Bilican, said it could take three to five days for all the refugees to leave northern Iraq.

The first group that arrived in a Turkish refugee camp was resting, sitting under white canvas tents. They were provided with loaves of bread and bottled water.

The prevailing moods were sadness and melancholy. Asked how he felt, refugee Shazad Hamit Abdullah said he was sad "because I left my country."

One young boy looked up and asked: "Are there Muslims in America?"

In a, 9th graf BC-Iraq-Turkey-Refugees, 1st Ld-Writethru

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[Iranian]
APW VVV83 Aa a---- Perry Heads Home After Lukewarm Recepti 09-17 4:29a

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Perry Heads Home After Lukewarm Reception
AP Photo DYB101
By SUZAN FRASER
Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Defense Secretary William Perry won only lukewarm support from Middle East allies, and headed home with his enthusiasm for a U.S. military buildup against Iraq noticeably deflated.

Perry began the trip last week promising a powerful response to what the United States saw as Saddam Hussein's provocations. By the end Monday, he said renewed air strikes on Iraq were merely a "possibility."

Many Arab governments have portrayed the recent U.S. actions against Iraq as heavy-handed. There is also a perception that the United States is intruding on an internal Iraqi matter - a civil war between two Kurdish factions.

Several major Arab countries that were part of the Gulf War coalition against Iraq, including Egypt, Syria and Jordan, have been less than supportive of the U.S. buildup.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey, both important U.S. allies, refused to allow anti-Iraq strikes to be launched from their territories. U.S. troops and planes, however, can use the small Gulf states of Kuwait and Bahrain.

The motivation for Bahrain's cooperation was unclear. The tiny island emirate usually takes its political cues from Saudi Arabia.

The support from Kuwait had been expected. The oil-rich emirate relied on U.S. forces to end a 1990-91 Iraqi occupation. But its decision to welcome U.S. troops came slowly, possibly to make sure its support wasn't being taken for granted.

Kuwaiti officials said the one-day delay in meeting the U.S. request was for procedural reasons.

The Pentagon declined to say how many soldiers would be sent. Earlier, the Pentagon had spoken of airlifting 3,000 soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas.

The Americans already have 1,200 ground troops training in the Kuwaiti desert as well as eight F-117A stealth attack planes that arrived last week.

In London Monday, Perry outlined what Saddam has to do to satisfy the United States, but he didn't set a deadline or say what would happen if Iraq failed to meet U.S. demands.

Ending missile attacks on allied planes was not enough, Perry said after meeting with his British and French counterparts. Saddam must stop mobilizing anti-aircraft artillery and stop rebuilding anti-aircraft sites damaged by earlier U.S. strikes.

All three countries have pilots maintaining the no-fly zones over Iraq.

British Secretary of Defense Michael Portillo was more qualified than Perry in his demands of Saddam, saying only that Britain was committed to defending its pilots.

French Defense Minister Charles Millon, meanwhile, credited the Iraqi leader for his promise last week not to attack allied pilots.

While Perry may not have received the ringing endorsements he sought, tension in the Middle East had abated by the end of his three-day trip.

On Aug. 31, Saddam sent soldiers into the U.S.-protected Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq to oust an Iranian-backed faction in favor of another Kurdish group allied with Baghdad.

Washington responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

Last week, Iraq fired a missile at two U.S. planes patrolling the "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq.

Since then, however, Iraq has toned down its anti-American rhetoric. On Friday, it said it would cease firing at allied warplanes - if they stopped patrolling Iraqi skies.

The fly-overs continue, but there have been no more reported Iraqi attacks on the planes.

The Americans and their allies have used Turkey's southern Incirlik base to patrol the no-fly zone over northern Iraq for the past five years.

But Turkey, which is led by the first Islamic-led government in the republic's history, no longer has much enthusiasm for the operation and has continued to cooperate only in response to American pressure.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan refused to change his schedule to meet with Perry. But the U.S. secretary met several other Turkish officials, including Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, Erbakan's pro-Western coalition partner.

Mrs. Ciller said Perry had not asked to use the southern Incirlik air base to strike at Iraqi targets.

"Even if there had been (a request), it would not have been possible for us to meet this," Mrs. Ciller said. "That would not be the correct move from the point of view of our own interests."

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[Greece]

APW VVV83 Aa a---- Perry Discusses Iraq Options with Briti 09-17 3:52a

BC-Britain-Perry

Perry Discusses Iraq Options with British, French Counterparts
By RUN KAMPEAS

Associated Press Writer

LONDON (AP) - Defense Secretary William Perry outlined Monday what Saddam Hussein has to do to satisfy American demands, but stopped short of naming the deadline and "or else" that would have made a fully fledged ultimatum.

Ending surface to air missile attacks on allied planes was not enough, Perry said after meeting with his British and French counterparts in London; Saddam needed to stop mobilizing anti-aircraft artillery, and to stop rebuilding anti-aircraft sites damaged by earlier U.S. strikes.

"Saddam Hussein is posing a threat to our air crews ... by the very aggressive deployment of mobile surface to air missiles into the zone and by the reconstitution and the moving of the SA2 and SA3 air defense sites there," Perry said.

"All of those actions we find provocative, all of them we find threatening, and all of them we find necessary that (Saddam) change," Perry said, concluding a tour that included Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

He would not specify a deadline for Saddam to pull back, and how the United States would respond if he didn't.

The toned-down approach underscored how Perry had won only lukewarm support from allies for the U.S. military buildup against Iraq he had touted last week.

Many Arab governments have portrayed the recent U.S. actions against Iraq as heavy-handed, and Turkey has refused to allow its territory to be used to launch strikes at Iraqi targets.

Only Bahrain and Kuwait have agreed to allow American use of their territory - and Kuwait, the main beneficiary of the allied victory in 1991 the Gulf War against Iraq, hesitated this week before agreeing to allow in more U.S. ground troops.

On Aug. 31, Saddam sent soldiers into the U.S.-protected Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq to oust an Iranian-backed faction in favor of another Kurdish group allied with Baghdad.

Washington responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4. Perry wanted to increase the missile attacks.

He failed to get backing for that, but on Monday, he insisted that his tour was nonetheless a success.

His meetings with regional leaders "reaffirmed our basic concern that Saddam Hussein was threatening the stability and security of the region and posing a threat and danger to his neighbors, that the linchpin in containing this threat has been the allied military presence in the region," he said.

Perry met for several hours with British Secretary of Defense Michael Portillo and French Defense Minister Charles Millon at the Northolt Royal Air Force Base in west London. All three countries have pilots maintaining the no-fly zones over Iraq.

Portillo was more qualified than Perry when asked what Britain expected of Saddam.

"We retain the absolute right of self defense and that we will be prepared to take the action that is necessary to our pilots," was all he would allow.

That was more equivocal than Britain's unqualified support for the original strikes was unequivocal.

French Defense Minister Charles Millon didn't even attend the press conference, immediately flying back to France.

Arriving in Paris, he differed from Perry and Portillo by crediting Saddam for his promise last week not to target allied pilots.

"The Iraqi decision to suspend all military activity against the allies ... is a sign of appeasement that must be taken into consideration," Millon said.

Britain and the United States say that Saddam's promises matter much less than his actions. France has urged all parties to avoid escalating the conflict.

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^BC-US-Iraq-Refugees,0532<

^U.S. Coping with Second Batch of Iraqi Refugees in Five Years<

^By GEORGE GEDDA=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ More than 2,000 Iraqi refugees are due to be on U.S. soil in the Pacific by Thursday even as the United States struggles to resettle thousands of other Iraqi dissidents stranded at refugee camps since the 1991 Gulf War.

Under the new program, U.S.-sponsored charter flights are expected to evacuate 2,075 Iraqis to Guam from their temporary refuge in southeastern Turkey.

About half that number had worked on U.S. humanitarian programs in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq and fear reprisals against them and their families now that forces allied to Saddam Hussein control much of that region.

Two flights carrying 792 Iraqis set out Monday on the long journey to Guam, where they will be housed for two to three months at military facilities. The State Department says the vast majority will resettle in the United States but those found to have criminal records will be excluded.

In Agaña, Guam, Gov. Carl Gutierrez said the refugees will live in 360 vacant military homes. Local public health and customs officials will work as the lead agencies in processing the refugees, the governor said. Once the processing stage is over, the evacuees will be relocated to the U.S. mainland.

About 200 soldiers from Schofield Barracks in Hawaii were deployed to Guam on Monday to aid in processing the refugees, as well as to provide security and distribute food. The deployment is expected to last three months.

Meanwhile, about 60,000 other displaced Iraqis are clustered along the border with Iran and face a far more uncertain future than their countrymen who fled to Turkey. The State Department says about 40,000 have made their way inside Iran and 20,000 more are on the Iraq side of the border. Numerous humanitarian agencies are providing assistance.

These Iraqis are linked to the Kurdish faction, which was routed in recent weeks by a rival group that gained the upper hand after inviting Saddam's army to enter the fray on their behalf.

Saddam's decision to send forces into that area triggered U.S. missile attacks against Iraq's air defense system.

The current exodus of Iraqis seems small compared with 1991 when nearly 2 million fled to Saudi Arabia and Iran during and after the Gulf War. Most eventually returned to Iraq, accepting an amnesty decreed by Saddam, but 32,000 stayed in camps in Saudi Arabia. Of these, most were defectors from Iraq's Army or were taken prisoner by the U.S.-led coalition forces and refused to return to Iraq after the war.

About 10,000 of these Iraqis have been resettled in the United States. More than 10,000 others have been accepted in other countries, including Iran, Sweden, Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland and Canada. About 3,000 opted to go back to Iraq.

Those entering the United States receive assistance from U.S. voluntary agencies, which arrange for food, a place to live and help in finding jobs. They generally are sent to locations where they have job prospects.

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^BC-US-Iraq-Refugees, 1st Ld

^U.S. Coping with Second Batch of Iraqi Refugees in Five Years<
Eds: UPDATES with 1st flight arrived in Guam.<

^By GEORGE GEDDA=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ More than 2,000 Iraqi refugees are due to be on U.S. soil in the Pacific by Thursday even as the United States struggles to resettle thousands of other Iraqi dissidents stranded at refugee camps since the 1991 Gulf War.

Under the new program, U.S.-sponsored charter flights are expected to evacuate 2,075 Iraqis to Guam from their temporary refuge in southeastern Turkey.

About half that number had worked on U.S. humanitarian programs in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq and fear reprisals against them and their families now that forces allied to Saddam Hussein control much of that region.

Two flights carrying 792 Iraqis set out Monday on the long journey to Guam, where they will be housed for two to three months at military facilities. The State Department says the vast majority will resettle in the United States but those found to have criminal records will be excluded.

In Agana, Guam, Gov. Carl Gutierrez said the refugees will live in 360 vacant military homes. Local public health and customs officials will work as the lead agencies in processing the refugees, the governor said. Once the processing stage is over, the evacuees will be relocated to the U.S. mainland.

The first of the two flights, carrying 469 passengers, landed in Guam Monday. Two additional flights were due to leave Turkey during the day.

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^Iraq Begins to Meet U.S. Demands<

^Eds: UPDATES with administration officials to brief congressional leaders, other details. Meeting scheduled to begin at 1200 GMT.<

^By BARRY SCHWEID=

^AP Diplomatic Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) — As President Clinton offers assurances he is not trying to force a showdown, Iraq is beginning to meet American demands for easing tensions in the Gulf. But the real test, U.S. officials say, is whether Saddam Hussein threatens his neighbors or allied forces.

With 3,000 U.S. soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, waiting to see whether they will be ordered to Kuwait for a new round of desert exercises, the officials said the United States was not cooling down because some of the allies opposed further military action.

Allied support is stronger today than it was when U.S. cruise missiles were launched against Iraqi military targets two weeks ago, said the officials, speaking on condition they not be named.

Indeed, Defense Secretary William Perry and Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau "found support for more action" on a trip to the Gulf over the weekend, a senior U.S. policy-maker said Monday. "Everybody says they would support us in defending our forces," the official said.

Administration officials were briefing congressional leaders Tuesday on U.S. actions regarding Iraq, which have included the missile attacks on Iraqi air defense systems and an expanded "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq. "The president wanted to make sure we brought congressional leaders and others in for more extensive briefing," White House spokesman Mike McCurry said.

Republicans have complained they have not been consulted on Iraq and charged that Clinton has not held together the international alliance that ousted Saddam's troops from Kuwait in 1991. They also have said Clinton has been unable to build a consensus among the allies for dealing with Saddam, including his treatment of Kurdish minorities in northern Iraq.

Kuwait agreed Monday to permit several thousand U.S. troops to deploy near the Iraqi border, and Bahrain told Perry it was willing to serve as a base for American forces and weaponry.

Saudi Arabia, however, has not permitted the United States to launch air strikes against Iraq from Saudi territory. And Arab League foreign ministers meeting over the weekend endorsed Iraq's "territorial integrity" and condemned "foreign interference" in Iraq — an apparent criticism of the American attacks.

Clinton, drawing back from two weeks of bellicose U.S. statements, said Monday the U.S. military buildup in the Gulf did not mean the United States was seeking a clash with Iraq.

"We have sought no confrontation with Saddam Hussein. We never did and we don't now," he said. "My concern is that we limit Saddam Hussein's ability to threaten his neighbors, that we do it with the no-fly zone and, in so doing, we keep our pilots safe."

U.S. officials, acknowledging the temperature was being lowered, insisted the reason was not the mixed views of the allies, though they were taken into account.

Rather, the officials said, Saddam's actions on the ground were the key. In this respect, they said Iraq had stopped threatening American and allied warplanes flying over northern and southern Iraq, and Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had concluded Iraq was not improving its anti-missile defenses.

These were two of the demands the State Department made of Baghdad last week.

"There are some signs he is doing things," the senior U.S. official said Monday, "but we are not fully satisfied. We need to make sure he doesn't pose a threat to our troops. We are going to stay in a very alert posture."

Saddam's response was less clear to demands that he not threaten his neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and that he comply with U.N. resolutions.

"That is the central question," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said of Saddam's behavior toward the two oil-rich neighbors, which the United States fought to defend against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War.

"We have to be realistic about Saddam Hussein," Burns said. "He has invaded his neighbors before and he has threatened them since, and we have got to assume that he is capable of doing both again."

On Friday, Saddam said he would no longer shoot at coalition planes patrolling the two no-fly zones over Iraqi soil. The same day, however, U.S. Army officials said 5,000 members of the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood had been ordered to deploy to Kuwait to take part in an ongoing exercise.

By Monday, officials said they expected no more than 3,000 to be going — but kept insisting no final order to move the troops had been issued.

"We have not gotten an execution order, and when it comes — if it comes — it might even be something less" than the 3,000, said III Corps spokesman Army Lt. Col. Randy Schoel.

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^Iraq Begins to Meet U.S. Demands<

^Eds: LEADS with 6 grafs to UPDATE with meeting underway. PICKUP 6th graf pvs.<

^By BARRY SCHWEID=

^AP Diplomatic Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ U.S. President Bill Clinton met Tuesday with congressional leaders to explain the administration's actions in Iraq amid signs that tensions with Saddam Hussein are easing.

Clinton is offering assurances that he is not trying to force a showdown and Iraq is beginning to meet American demands for avoiding further confrontation in the Gulf. But the real test, U.S. officials say, is whether the Iraqi leader threatens his neighbors or allied forces.

With 3,000 U.S. soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, waiting to see whether they will be ordered to Kuwait for a new round of desert exercises, the officials said the United States' resolve was not weakening even though some allies have opposed further military action.

Allied support is stronger today than it was when U.S. cruise missiles were launched against Iraqi military targets two weeks ago, said the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Defense Secretary William Perry and Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau "found support for more action" on a trip to the Gulf over the weekend, a senior U.S. policy-maker said Monday.

"Everybody says they would support us in defending our forces," the official said.

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^Republicans have ... PICKUP 6th graf pvs.<

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^U.S., Iraq Tensions Cool; Patriot Missiles Deployed in Kuwait<

^Eds: AMs. UPDATES with Clinton announcement on troops, Patriot missiles deployed in Kuwait, Iraqi opposition group claiming Iraq is massing troops in the south.<

^AP Photo available<

^By DIANA ELIAS=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUWAIT (AP) _ Raising its preparedness for possible military action against Iraq, the United States on Tuesday prepared to send more troops to Kuwait and deployed Scud-busting Patriot missile batteries in the emirate.

Although tension between Baghdad and Washington appeared to have eased, U.S. forces were not taking any chances as President Clinton said he had signed orders to send thousands more troops.

Kuwait earlier had indicated it would welcome the troops. A Pentagon official said it would be "about 3,000 troops, but that's a flexible number."

In Kuwait, an Associated Press photographer spotted Patriot anti-missile batteries in the Kuwaiti desert and a U.S. Embassy spokesman confirmed that the Patriots had been deployed.

Their crews arrived earlier from the United States after the Pentagon announced it was sending two Patriot units to the region to protect Gulf allies from possible Iraqi missile attacks.

An Iraqi Shiite Muslim opposition group, meanwhile, claimed that Saddam Hussein was massing troops in the south of the country in preparation for a widescale operation against dissidents.

The group, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq has reported such movements troop several time in the past but the U.S. and its allies _ which are flying dozens of sorties over the area daily _ have not confirmed the reports.

Kuwait began diplomatic rounds in the Gulf to explain its decision to open its territory to U.S. warplanes and troops. The defense minister began a tour of the Gulf with stops in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The information minister headed to Egypt and Syria.

Several major Arab countries that were part of the Gulf War coalition against Iraq, including Egypt and Syria, have been less than supportive of the U.S. buildup.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey, both important U.S. allies, refused to allow anti-Iraq strikes to be launched from their territories.

Turkey's Foreign Ministry announced Tuesday that Massoud Barzani head of the Iraqi-backed Kurdish faction that took control of northern Iraq earlier this month, would travel to Ankara to meet with Turkish officials later this week.

"We've always favored keeping the channels open with the Kurdish groups," a Foreign Ministry official told the AP. The official spoke on condition of anonymity.

The latest crisis began Aug. 31 when Saddam sent soldiers into the U.S.-protected Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq. They ousted one Kurdish faction in favor of the Kurdish group allied with Baghdad.

Washington responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

Last week, Iraq fired missiles at U.S. planes patrolling the "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq.

Since then, however, Iraq has toned down its anti-American rhetoric. On Friday, it said it would cease firing at allied warplanes _ if they stopped patrolling Iraqi skies.

The fly-overs continue, but there have been no more reported Iraqi attacks.

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^Clinton Sending Troops to Kuwait, Patriot Missiles Deployed<

^Eds: UPDATES with Aziz, Clinton quotes in grafs 2-3 and 8-9.<

^AP Photo available<

^By DIANA ELIAS=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUWAIT (AP) _ Raising its preparedness for possible military action against Iraq, the United States on Tuesday prepared to send more troops to Kuwait and deployed Scud-busting Patriot missile batteries in the emirate.

A brief lull in the war of words also ended as President Clinton said he aimed to "keep Saddam Hussein in a box" while Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said the United States was "preparing an aggression against Iraq."

Clinton said he had signed orders to send thousands more troops. Kuwait earlier had indicated it would welcome the troops. A Pentagon official said it would be "about 3,000 troops, but that's a flexible number."

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Clinton, authorizing the dispatch of more troops to Kuwait, said "the response we gave was designed to improve the strategic position of the United States and our allies to keep Saddam Hussein in a box and limit his ability to threaten his neighbors."

Tuesday night, Aziz blisteringly responded that "American pretexts and justifications for deploying its troops in the Arab Gulf region is aimed at preparing an aggression on Iraq," the state-run Iraqi News Agency reported.

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^Hundreds of Kurdish Refugees Welcomed on Guam<

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (AP) _ Tired but smiling, hundreds of Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq arrived Tuesday and were greeted by signs reading: ``America welcomes you.''

This first group of 792 refugees, evacuated to protect them from Iraqi reprisals, were flown out of Turkey on Monday on the first leg of a journey that eventually will take them to new homes on the U.S. mainland.

They filed off chartered planes and gathered in a makeshift processing center where military personnel hung signs in Arabic that read, ``Please have a seat'' and ``America welcomes you.''

Volunteers greeted them in English, Turkish and Arabic and offered snacks of fresh fruit. A playroom was set up for the children with chairs, small desks, crayons, coloring books and crackers.

The families arrived with only their children and three bags of belongings. Military officials said there were 205 children in the group, including 18 infants.

Altogether, 2,075 refugees will be brought to this U.S. possession in the Pacific, 3,200 miles (5,120 kilometers) from Hawaii, this week. They will live in vacant military housing. Military crews have also set up kitchens, dining tents and mosques.

``We are shaping history,''' said Senior Airman Deb Dirskill said. The refugees ``may have a future now because of us.''

Guam residents were asked to make donations for the newcomers.

``We're not looking for food right now,''' said Navy Capt. George Allison. ``We need things like pots and pans, diapers, toys, cribs, playpens, cups, plates, silverware.''

Reporters were not allowed access to the Kurds.

``They're obviously very tired,''' Air Force Maj. Gen. J.D. Dallager said. ``There's that look of enthusiasm on their face, but they've been up for a couple of days and they're tired, and I think they'd like to go home to their new community and go to bed.''

The evacuees will be moved on to the U.S. mainland after health and customs processing and approval of visas.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the United States felt an obligation to the refugees since Iraqi forces had regained control over their region.

About 300 of the refugees worked for the U.S. government, primarily as drivers, security personnel and translators, Arnett said. The others included relatives, members of the CIA-funded Iraqi National Congress and Kurds who worked for international humanitarian agencies.

``They are seen by the Iraqi government as traitors _ they are working for the enemy,''' Dallager said.

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^Britain Pledges Troops For Kuwait If Needed<

LONDON (AP) _ Britain is still ready to send troops to Kuwait to defend it against threats of Iraqi attacks, Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said Tuesday.

Speaking after talks with Kuwaiti foreign minister, Sheik Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Rifkind said: "We have shown in the past a willingness ... for troops to be sent and if it became necessary in the future we would also respond in a positive way."

The British foreign secretary said he had an "important and positive discussion" with his Kuwaiti counterpart, who had earlier also visited France.

"The United Kingdom stands four-square with Kuwait in the defense of its independence and its territorial integrity," Rifkind said.

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said Tuesday that 3,500 troops will join 1,200 already in Kuwait as part of the U.S. military build-up in the region.

The crisis began Aug. 31 with an Iraqi raid on U.S.-protected Kurdish areas in northern Iraq.

The raid was Saddam's biggest military venture since the end of the 1991 Gulf War. That _ and the subsequent offensive by Iraq's Kurdish allies against a rival faction _ effectively wiped out the safe haven established in the north of the country to protect Kurds at the end of the Gulf War.

Rifkind, whose government was one of the few to back the U.S. bombing of Iraqi targets with cruise missiles two weeks ago, said that allied states needed to show "continuing vigilance" when dealing with Iraq.

"There has been a common perception that the events of the last few weeks show the need for continuing international concern ... and the needed to ensure that any Iraqi aggressive or repressive measures are met with firm action," he said.

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^US Official To Meet with Kurdish Leader<

^With US-Iraq<

WASHINGTON (AP) _ A top U.S. State Department official plans to meet Thursday with the leader of the Iraqi Kurdish faction invited President Saddam Hussein to send his army into the region.

The location of the meeting between Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau and Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, has not yet been decided, department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

Barzani extendedeghboring Iran. Saddam's troops moved into the region to help put

Barzani in control, dealing a blow to U.S. policy in the region.

"We've called upon both parties to disengage themselves from their alliances with Iran and Iraq. We think it's a terrible tactical mistake that will be to their long-term disadvantage," Burns said.

He said the meeting is consistent with the U.S. goal of encouraging Barzani and PUK leader Jalal Talabani to negotiate an end to their rivalry.

"Our objective is to have Mr. Barzani and Mr. Talabani agree to talk about their differences peacefully and across from one another at the negotiating table," Burns said.

He said the administration hopes to arrange a meeting with Talabani, who has fled to a remote region near the Iranian border since the balance of power on the battlefield shifted to the KDP.

In an interview with a private Turkish television station, Barzani aide Sami Abdurrahman said the group's alliance with Iraq has ended.

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^Hundreds of Kurdish Refugees Welcomed on Guam<

^Eds: SUBS penultimate graf pvs, 'About 300....,' to RESTORE spokesman Arnett's first name. Picks up last graf pvs, 'They are...'

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (AP) — Tired but smiling, hundreds of Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq arrived Tuesday and were greeted by signs reading: 'America welcomes you.'

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'They are seen by the Iraqi government as traitors — they are working for the enemy,' Dallager said.

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^Four Reported Killed in Shelling on Iran-Iraq Border<

^EDs: UPDATES with additional comments, details from Iraqi side of the border.<

^By SELCAN HACAQGLU=

^Associated Press Writer=

HELSEW VILLAGE, Iraq (AP) -- Iran claimed Wednesday that four Iraqi Kurds were killed when a large refugee camp came under shelling from the Iraqi side of the border.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency blamed the artillery and mortar fire on the Iraqi army and the allied Kurdistan Democratic Party, the group that recently took control of northern Iraq.

However, the report could not be independently verified. Journalists who have been on the Iraqi side of the border in recent days have seen many KDP fighters, but no Iraqi forces in the area.

U.S. and allied warplanes are monitoring the no-fly zone in northern Iraq, but U.S. officials have not reported any Iraqi forces this far north.

Three of the four killed in the Siran Band refugee camp in northwest Iran were children, the IRNA report said, adding that 10 people were wounded.

Iran said the camp is providing shelter for around 35,000 Iraqi Kurd refugees who had crossed the border after the recent turmoil in northern Iraq.

There have been no major battles in northern Iraq since the KDP routed the PUK and captured Sulaymaniya, the group's last major stronghold, on Sept. 10.

However, there have been several reports of skirmishes along the Iran-Iraq border.

In the Helshew Village on the Iraqi side of the border, residents said they also had been shelled on Sunday and Tuesday.

They blamed Iran and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the group that was routed and driven out of northern Iraq in the recent fighting.

A funeral was held Wednesday for a 70-year-old woman killed a day earlier, allegedly by PUK guerrilla.

"Why did they attack us, we're not gunmen," said Mohammed Hacı the son of victim.

Anwar Hacı Osman, the KDP commander in the area, claimed that the Iranians shelled with 130 mm guns on Tuesday, and six rounds hit the village of Gal'at Di. Some residents of Gal'at Dizah fled to nearby town of yah in

fear Tuesday but made a quick return Wednesday.

"If they shell again, I will also take my four children and run away," said Bahtiyar Hasan, a street vendor in Gal'at Dizah.

The exact number of PUK guerrillas in the mountains was not known. Top commanders of the vanquished PUK, including leader Jalal Talabani, reportedly escaped into Iran and some guerrillas have deserted and joined the KDP.

(sh-gm)

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^Precede KUWAIT

^Iraqi Kurdish Leader Arrives in Turkey<

(Eds: UPDATES with Barzani's trip to Turkey; his meetings are expected to begin after 1300 GMT<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish leader who allied with Saddam Hussein to beat a Kurdish rival _ and dealt a blow to opponents of the Iraqi president _ arrived in Turkey on Wednesday for talks with U.S. and Turkish officials.

Meanwhile, as Kuwait launched a diplomatic offensive to explain its basing U.S. warplanes and troops there, U.S. Patriot anti-missile units bristled in the emirate as Washington girded for possible action against Iraq.

Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, crossed into Turkey on Wednesday through the Turkish-Iraqi border gate at Habur en route to the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir, his spokesman Faik Merweyi told The Associated Press.

Merweyi said Barzani would meet with Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller and U.S. Undersecretary of State Robert Pelletreau. He gave no itinerary, but Barzani was expected to fly to Ankara later in the day.

Barzani has declared that his deal with Saddam was merely a temporary one _ and that it was now over.

The Iraqi Kurdish leader said he was forced to turn to Baghdad after his rival, Jalal Talabani, allied with Iran in a power struggle for control of Kurdish northern Iraq.

Iraqi Kurds had a de facto state in northern Iraq after the Gulf War under the protection of a U.S.-led allied coalition force in "Operation Provide Comfort."

But Washington withdrew the military coordination center for the coalition force from northern Iraq after the intra-Kurd turmoil this month. Most official and private aid groups also left the region.

Turkey, fearful the power vacuum in northern Iraq will help its own autonomy-seeking Kurdish rebels, declared a security zone across the border in northern Iraq.

Barzani's visit to Turkey signaled a possible warming of relations with Ankara and Washington.

U.S. authorities are expected to try to convince Barzani to reach peace with Talabani and share authority in the region, while the Turks will explain the requirements for their security zone.

As two new Patriot missile batteries were uncrated in Kuwait on Tuesday, the emirate embarked on a round of defending their presence to other Arab countries. The Kuwaiti defense minister was making his government's case for them with the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, while its information minister was explaining to Egypt and Syria the need for the growing U.S. force presence.

The Patriots were sent by the Pentagon to guard the oil-rich state, invaded in 1990 by Saddam's troops, against possible Iraqi Scud missile attacks.

President Clinton has also dispatched 3,500 more Army troops to Kuwait to join 1,200 others already conducting war games there, the Pentagon said.

The first of the additional U.S. troops were scheduled to leave the United States on Wednesday and be in place by the end of the week.

France, finally closing ranks with Washington and London against Saddam, Tuesday said it would let U.S. planes fly over French territory. Britain said it was ready to send troops to Kuwait.

Several Arab and Western countries that were part of the 1990-1991 Gulf War coalition against Iraq have been less supportive of the U.S. buildup this time.

However, on Tuesday in Paris, French officials made the fly-over concession to U.S. forces for reprisals against Iraq, even though France still opposes an immediate strike.

French officials further left open the possibility of hitting back if Baghdad fired again on U.S., French or British planes enforcing "no-fly" zones over Iraq.

The "no-fly" zones were created after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurdish minorities in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south from Saddam's military.

British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, after talks Tuesday with Kuwait's foreign minister, said Britain was ready to send troops to defend Kuwait against Iraq.

Meanwhile, as opposition groups claimed Iraqi troops were massing in southern Iraq to move against Iraqi Shiite, Baghdad newspapers mocked U.S. reprisals against Saddam's forces for shooting at coalition aircraft protecting the Kurds.

"We may say that every missile launched by the United States against Iraq was actually striking the Americans' foreign policy wall," scoffed Babil, the Iraqi daily paper owned by Saddam's son, Odai Hussein.

In its Wednesday edition, Babil declared any use of U.S. F-117 stealth attack planes, now based in Kuwait, against Iraq would be "... the mercy shot fired by Iraq at the American foreign policy's head, and especially the political future for President Clinton," who is running for re-election.

The Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a Shiite opposition group, has reported Iraqi troop movements several times in the past, but the U.S. and its allies _ which are flying dozens of sorties over the area daily _ have not confirmed the reports.

The latest crisis began Aug. 31, when Saddam sent troops into the U.S.-protected Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq, where they helped Barzani out Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Washington responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

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^BC-Iraq, 3rd Ld<

^Fresh Clashes in Kurdish Areas; Leader Visits Turkey<

^Eds: NEW grafs 6-7 with Kurdish leader meeting U.S. official, no statement issued.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ With fresh clashes reported in a Kurdish region, the top Kurdish leader in northern Iraq arrived Wednesday hoping to consolidate his position in talks with Turkey and the United States.

Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, has said that the temporary military alliance with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is over now that he's in control of northern Iraq.

And Turkey, a key U.S. ally and a member of NATO, said Wednesday it was willing to work with Barzani as the de facto leader of the region despite his links to Saddam.

"We still advocate Iraqi territorial integrity, but during the current power vacuum (in northern Iraq), there will be a local government," Turkey's Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said.

Turkey is fearful that chaos in northern Iraq will help its own Kurdish rebels, and it's keeping a close watch on the region.

Barzani met later with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, but they did not speak to reporters afterward.

American officials have said previously that they would like Barzani and other Kurdish groups to end their feuding and share power.

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^Fresh Clashes in Kurdish Areas; Leader Visits Turkey<

^Eds: Ams. UPDATES with meeting between Turkey and Kurdish leader, comments from PUK, minor editing.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ With fresh clashes reported in a Kurdish region, the top Kurdish leader in northern Iraq arrived Wednesday hoping to consolidate his position in talks with Turkey and the United States.

Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, has said that the temporary military alliance with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is over now that he's in control of northern Iraq.

And Turkey, a key U.S. ally and a member of NATO, said Wednesday it was willing to work with Barzani as the de facto leader of the region despite his links to Saddam.

"We still advocate Iraqi territorial integrity, but during the current power vacuum (in northern Iraq), there will be a local government," Turkey's Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said.

Turkey is fearful that chaos in northern Iraq will help its own Kurdish rebels, and it's keeping a close watch on the region.

Barzani was also planned to meet with U.S. officials who were expected to try to persuade him to share power with his Kurdish rivals.

Meanwhile, fresh clashes were reported Wednesday along the Iraq-Iran border involving the Kurds.

Iran claimed that four Iraqi Kurds were killed when a large refugee camp came under shelling from the Iraqi side of the border.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency blamed the artillery and mortar fire on the Iraqi army and Barzani's KDP forces.

However, the report could not be independently verified.

Journalists who have been on the Iraqi side of the border in recent days have seen many KDP fighters, but no Iraqi forces in the area.

U.S. and allied warplanes are monitoring the no-fly zone in northern Iraq, but U.S. officials have not cited any Iraqi military activity in the north.

Iran said the camp is providing shelter for around 35,000 Iraqi Kurd refugees who had crossed the border after the recent turmoil in northern Iraq.

There have been no major battles in northern Iraq since Sept. 18 when the KDP drove the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan out of the region.

However, there have been several reports of skirmishes along the Iran-Iraq border.

On the Iraqi side of the border, residents said they also had been shelled in recent days. They blamed Iran and the PUK.

The PUK accuses Iraq and the KDP of continuing to round up opposition figures in northern Iraq.

"A brutal terror campaign has been unleashed to eliminate political dissent in Iraqi Kurdistan," the group said Wednesday in a statement.

However, reporters in the major cities in northern Iraq have not seen evidence of such a campaign since the fighting ended last week.

In another development, a U.S. military spokesman in Saudi Arabia said that Iraqi air defense systems have been tracking U.S. and allied warplanes patrolling "no-fly" zones, but that Baghdad has kept its promise not to fire on them.

Iraq said Friday it would stop firing on warplanes patrolling over northern and southern Iraq. However, they have continued to turn their radar systems on and off, said Lt. Col. Andrew Bourland.

"We merely picked up an indication that their systems were turned on," Bourland told The Associated Press from the Saudi capital, Riyadh. "We only experienced minor indications from Iraqi surface-to-air encampments which we don't consider any significant threat."

Bourland said the United States also has beefed up its forces in Saudi Arabia with several Patriot anti-missile batteries and about 170 personnel to operate them.

The latest crisis in Iraq began Aug. 31, when Saddam sent troops to help Barzani take control of the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.

The Americans responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

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^Aircraft Carrier, Ground Troops Beef Up U.S. Presence<

^Eds: UPDATES with U.S. aircraft carrier arriving in the Gulf,
American ground troops set to arrive in Kuwait around 1300 GMT.<

^AP Photos Available<

^By ANDREW SELSKY=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUWAIT (AP) -- A second U.S. aircraft carrier arrived in the Gulf and more troops were set to land in Kuwait as the United States pressed ahead Thursday with a military building meant to discourage Saddam Hussein from threatening his neighbors.

However, after two weeks of confrontation, tensions have been cooling in recent days. Iraq has not fired on U.S. aircraft patrolling the northern and southern "no-fly" zones since last week, and the rhetoric has been toned down on both sides.

Still, the Americans continued to prepare. They will soon have more than 30,000 personnel and 200 planes in the region, most of them aboard about 35 ships in the Gulf.

The aircraft carrier USS Enterprise arrived in the Gulf on Thursday, carrying about 75 warplanes and 8,000 personnel in its battle group, said Cmdr. T. McCreary, a U.S. Navy spokesman in the Gulf.

It joins the carrier USS Carl Vinson, which has been taking part in Operation Southern Watch, the policing of the "no-fly" zone in southern Iraq.

In Kuwait, meanwhile, the first batch of 3,500 troops being airlifted from Fort Hood, Texas, was expected Thursday afternoon.

They will join 1,200 others who have been conducting war games near the Iraqi border in recent weeks.

U.S. and allied warplanes have been flying unchallenged through Iraqi skies in recent days, but U.S. officials said Iraqi air defense systems were keeping a close eye on them with radar.

"We merely picked up an indication that their (radar) systems were turned on," Lt. Col. Andrew Bourland said in an interview Wednesday from the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

But, he added, "we only experienced minor indications from Iraq surface-to-air encampments which we don't consider any significant threat."

On the Iraq-Iran border, meanwhile, fresh clashes involving Kurds were reported Wednesday.

Neighboring Iran claimed that four Iraqi Kurds, including three children, were killed when a large refugee camp was shelled from the Iraqi side of the border.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency blamed the artillery and mortar fire on the Iraqi army and on Kurdish faction leader Massoud Barzani's forces.

The report could not be independently verified.

U.S. and allied warplanes are monitoring the no-fly zone in northern Iraq, and have not reported any Iraqi military activity there.

Iran said the camp provides shelter for about 35,000 Iraqi Kurd refugees who have crossed the border since the latest turmoil began Aug. 31.

There have been no major battles in northern Iraq since Sept. 10 when the Iraq-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party drove its Kurdish rivals out of the region. However, there have been several reports of small-scale skirmishes along the border.

Residents of the Iraqi villages of Qal'at Dizah and Helshew said they also had been shelled in recent days. They blamed the routed Kurdish faction, the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

In another development, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau met with Barzani in Turkey.

Neither gave details, but U.S. officials have said that they want Barzani to cut ties with Saddam, something the Kurdish leader has pledged to do.

Barzani has said the KDP's temporary military alliance with Saddam is over now that he is in control of northern Iraq.

And Turkey, a U.S. ally, said it was willing to work with Barzani as the de facto leader of the region.

"We still advocate Iraqi territorial integrity, but during the current power vacuum, there will be a local government," Turkey's Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said after talks with Barzani.

Turkey fears chaos in northern Iraq will help its own Kurdish rebels, and it is closely watching the region.

The latest crisis in Iraq began when Saddam sent troops to help Barzani take control of the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq. The Americans responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq the following week.

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^BC-Kurds-US-Left Behind<

^Post-Cesarian Woman and Family Miss Last Plane to Guam<

^By TONY SMITH=

^Associated Press Writer=

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AP) _ When Muna Abdulkareem, clutching her 15-hour-old son, found out she couldn't get out of the ambulance at Diyarbakir airport and into the Boeing 747 waiting to evacuate the last of 2,000 Iraqi Kurds to a new life in Guam, she wept.

On doctors' recommendations, the pilot of the U.S. government-chartered jet refused to take Muna on board Wednesday night.

The baby had been delivered that morning by cesarian and, though the operation had gone well, medics said it was too risky for the 25-year old first-time mother to take the over 20-hour flight.

"She was very worried, very disappointed," explained her brother Salahaddin Thursday morning as Muna lay back slumbering in a Diyarbakir hospital bed. "I calmed her down with jokes and stories. Then they told us we'd still be able to go to America later and so it was okay."

"We were very worried because we thought if we didn't go last night, we wouldn't go at all," said husband Darveesh Muhsin, 28, looking proudly at his still-unnamed son, bawling his lungs out in a cot near his mother's bed.

In the confusion the couple hadn't had time to think of a name.

"Maybe we'll call him Diyarbakir," said Darveesh.

"Muna was thinking of Sedel but in America that might sound like a girl's name," added Salahaddin.

Turkish doctors at the hospital said Muna's operation had gone without a hitch and she could travel if she wanted. So she, husband, son and brother boarded the ambulance and sped to the airport where other members of their families were already climbing the steps into the Jumbo.

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They were last to arrive and, after lengthy negotiations with soldiers guarding the military part of the airstrip, the ambulance rolled up to the plane.

But U.S. medics and the charter company thought the trip too risky, especially as no doctors were on board.

"What if she had started bleeding or gotten an infection?" explained Frank Ricciardone, deputy chief of mission from the U.S. embassy in Ankara who was coordinating the evacuation and visited Muna Thursday. "Why turn a really happy thing into a tragedy?"

He reassured Muna that she and the others would be reunited with their other family members in Guam as soon as she was fit to travel.

Doctors said that would be in about five days.

Many of the Iraqi Kurds leaving for Guam were uneasy about their stay in Turkey, which is waging its own war against Kurdish separatists, and that added to Muna's anxiety to join her 409 compatriots aboard the plane.

Turkish doctors stressed to the family that Muna was only being kept back for medical reasons and all efforts would be made to get her up and ready to travel as soon as possible.

Obviously exhausted, Muna just smiled and told her visitors she felt fine but tired.

Although they have left two houses, a store and three cars behind, the family is not worried about the challenges of starting from scratch in the United States.

"I've started from zero before," said Salahaddin. In 1991, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein crushed a Kurdish rebellion, and the family was among some 2 million Kurds who fled to Turkey and Iran.

"I came back to find only one wall left of my house but I built it up again even better than it had been before."

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^US Official, Kurdish Leader Meet In Turkey<

^By GEORGE GEDDA=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) ÷ Hoping to ease fighting by rival Iraqi Kurds, a top State Department official held an unannounced meeting Wednesday with the leader of a group that joined forces with President Saddam Hussein to rout a rival faction earlier this month.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns gave no details about the meeting, which took place in Turkey.

The U.S. side was led by Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau. Leading the Kurdish delegation was Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani whose forces, with Iraqi help, repulsed the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Forces. Also attending the meeting was a leader of the Iraqi Turkomen community.

Burns said the United States is also trying to arrange a meeting with PUK leader Jalal Talabani, whose troops have fled to a remote area near the Iranian border in northern Iraq.

The United States wants an end to the increasingly bitter showdown that has turned Kurd against Kurd and gave an opening to Saddam that he was able to exploit.

Burns talked about the meeting only in general terms. He said the participants discussed the ``continuing U.S. interest in contributing to peace and stability in the region and U.S. concerns about the humanitarian situation of the Kurds, Turkomen, Assyrians and others who live in the region.''

The group also discussed concerns about the safety of those affiliated with U.S. operations there.

Barzani has said his link with Saddam Hussein was only temporary.

Burns reaffirmed the U.S. hope that the alliance with Baghdad was indeed a ``one-shot deal'' because ``we don't see that the Iraqi Kurds can profit in the long term from an association from Saddam Hussein. On the contrary, we believe that such a relationship would be detrimental to them.''

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^New Mother Bumped Off The Last Plane to Guam<

^By TONY SMITH=

^Associated Press Writer=

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AP) — When Muna Abdulkareem heard she could not board the last plane to Guam with her newborn son and the last of the 2,000 Kurds fleeing Iraq, she wept.

“She was very worried, very disappointed,” her brother Salahaddin, said Thursday, as his sister nodded between waking and sleep in a Diyarbakir hospital bed.

“I calmed her down with jokes and stories. Then they told us we’d still be able to go to America later, and so it was okay,” Salahaddin said.

Mrs. Abdulkareem and her son — who was born Wednesday morning — plus her husband and her brother were the last of the Kurds fleeing northern Iraq to arrive at Diyarbakir airport Wednesday night.

When they arrived, others families were already climbing the stairs into the jet.

More than 2,000 Kurds who had connections to U.S. aid agencies in northern Iraq fled their homeland following the recent turmoil. They have been flown to Guam in recent days for eventual resettlement in the United States.

After lengthy negotiations with soldiers guarding the military area of the airstrip, Mrs. Abdulkareem’s ambulance rolled up to the waiting Boeing 747.

Turkish doctors at the hospital had said the Caesarian section that delivered Mrs. Abdulkareem’s son had gone well. She could travel if she wanted, they said.

But U.S. medics and the charter company said there was still too much risk for the first-time mother, 25, in the 20-hour flight to the U.S. island in distant Pacific. There would be no doctors on board.

On doctors’ advice, the pilot of the U.S. government-chartered Boeing 747 refused to allow her aboard.

“What if she had started bleeding or gotten an infection?” said Frank Ricciardone, deputy chief of mission from the U.S. embassy in Ankara, who was coordinating the evacuation. “Why turn a really happy thing into a tragedy?”

“We were very worried because we thought if we didn’t go last night, we wouldn’t go at all,” said Mrs. Abdulkareem’s husband, Darveesh Muhsin, 28.

Ricciardone visited her on Thursday with reassurance that she, her husband, their child and her brother would go to Guam as soon as she was fit to travel.

Despite leaving two houses, a store and three cars in Iraq, the family was not worried about starting over in the United States.

“I’ve started from zero before,” Salahaddin recalled.

In 1991, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein crushed a Kurdish rebellion. The family was among some 2 million Kurds who then fled.

“I came back to find only one wall left of my house, but I built it up again even better than it had been before,” Salahaddin said.

And the child’s name? In the confusion, the couple hadn’t thought of one.

“Maybe we’ll call him Diyarbakir,” said Muhsin.

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^Aircraft Carrier, Ground Troops Beef Up U.S. Presence

^Eds: Ams. UPDATES with UNHCR confirming casualties in Iranian refugee camp, pro-Baghdad Kurds denying they shelled the camp.

^AP Photos KUW101, 103

^By ANDREW SELSKY=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUWAIT (AP) - The United States forged ahead with its military buildup Thursday as more ground troops arrived in Kuwait and a second aircraft carrier sailed into the Gulf to help patrol the skies over Iraq.

Further details, meanwhile, emerged of an incident in which 11 Kurdish refugees were wounded when an Iranian refugee camp was hit by shell fire from artillery batteries inside Iraq. Iran claimed the shells were fired by Baghdad-backed Kurdish guerrillas, but the guerrillas denied that.

Some 200 American soldiers arrived at Kuwait International Airport, the vanguard of 3,500 additional U.S. troops sent by President Clinton to protect Kuwait.

The soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, join 1,200 others who have been training in the Kuwaiti desert for several weeks. They are using 120 Abrams M1-A1 tanks and 60 Bradley fighting vehicles that have been prepositioned here.

Soon, more than 38,000 U.S. military personnel and 200 American planes will be in the region, most of them aboard about 35 ships in the Gulf.

The American troop and weaponry buildup is pushing ahead, even though two weeks of tension sparked by the overrunning of a Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq have begun to ease.

Iraq has not fired on U.S. aircraft patrolling the northern and southern "no-fly" zones since last week and both sides have toned down their rhetoric. The zones were established at the end of the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south.

The USS Enterprise sailed into the Gulf on Thursday carrying about 75 warplanes and 8,000 personnel in its battle group, said Cmdr. T. McCreary, a U.S. Navy spokesman. It joins the carrier USS Carl Vinson, which has been involved in policing a no-fly zone in southern Iraq.

U.S. officials said Wednesday that Iraqi air defense systems have been radar tracking American and allied warplanes flying unchallenged through Iraqi skies. Lt. Col. Andrew Bourland said in an interview from the Saudi capital, Riyadh, that the tracking wasn't considered a significant threat.

"We merely picked up an indication that their (radar) systems were turned on," Bourland said.

Fresh clashes involving Kurds were reported near the Iran-Iraq border Wednesday.

Iran claimed that four Iraqi Kurds, including three children, were killed when a large Iranian refugee camp was shelled from the Iraqi side of the border. The Iranians claimed the shells were fired by the Iraqi army and a pro-Baghdad Kurdish guerrilla faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

In Geneva, the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said 11 refugees had been wounded during shelling of the Siran Band refugee camp in Iran. It had no report of deaths.

UNHCR spokeswoman Judith Melby said there was a "shooting incident" on the Iraqi side of the border and "one can assume" it was between the two main Kurdish factions.

"There was then shelling toward the camp of Siran Band, and there was a response by the Iranians ... and the situation was total panic in the camp," Ms. Melby said in Geneva.

On the Iraqi side of the border, a KDP commander denied shelling the Iranian camp.

"That's all lies, we haven't attacked that camp," said the commander, Ghazi Atrushi. "We have strict orders not to attack the refugee camps," he told Associated Press reporter Selcan Hacaoglu.

U.S. and allied warplanes monitoring the no-fly zone in northern Iraq have not reported any Iraqi military activity in the area close to the camp.

Iran said the camp provides shelter for about 35,000 Iraqi Kurd refugees who have crossed the border since the latest turmoil began Aug. 31.

There have been no major battles in northern Iraq since Sept. 10 when the Iraq-allied Kurdistan Democratic Party drove its Kurdish rivals out of the region. However, there have been several reports of small-scale skirmishes along the border.

Residents of the Iraqi villages of Bal'at Dizah and Helshew said they also had been shelled in recent days. They blamed the KDP.

The latest crisis in Iraq began when Saddam sent troops to help Barzani take control of the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq. The Americans responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq the following week.

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^Aircraft Carrier, Ground Troops Beef Up U.S. Presence<

^Eds: UPDATES 12th graf with Iran raising death toll in camp.<

^AP Photos KUW101, 103<

^By ANDREW SELSKY=

^Associated Press Writer=

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^Kurdish Refugees Settle In On Guam<

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (AP) _ The last of the 2,137 Kurdish refugees fleeing Iraq for the United States reached this U.S. territory Friday as the military worked to settle them in.

Fearing reprisals from Saddam Hussein, Kurds who worked for the United States and U.S. relief agencies fled to Turkey earlier this week. They and their families were housed in refugee camps there before being flown to this Pacific island.

The Kurds are living in vacant military units, and food is being provided. Military officials hope the Kurds will start making their own meals since the Kurds aren't used to military fare of oatmeal, corn and other typical American foods.

Large signs, in English and Arabic, have been put up to tell the Muslim Kurds that ``This food is free from pork.''

The base's health clinic also tries to keep at least one female staffer on duty around the clock since some of the women don't want male doctors and nurses touching them, said Air Force Capt. Heather Callum. Some of the Kurds were being treated for colds, dehydration and exhaustion.

The airlift from Turkey began Tuesday. Federal immigration officials have arrived to begin processing the refugees for asylum into the United States.

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 ^New U.S. Troops Deployed Near Iraq, More on the Way<
 ^Eds: UPDATES grafs 17-20 with U.N. now saying 11 killed in
 Wednesday's shelling of a refugee camp in Iran.<
 ^AP Photos Available<
 ^By ANDREW SELSKY=
 ^Associated Press Writer=

KUWAIT (AP) _ American soldiers fanned out across the desert for live-fire exercises near the Iraqi border Friday, and more troops were on the way as the United States kept the pressure on Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

The confrontation between the United States and Iraq has eased in the past week, but the Americans have continued their buildup in the Gulf.

More than 30,000 U.S. military personnel will soon be in the Gulf compared to fewer than 20,000 before the crisis erupted three weeks ago.

Two planeloads of American soldiers arrived in Kuwait Thursday from Fort Hood, Texas, and more were expected over the next few days. Some 3,500 soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division were ordered to Kuwait by President Clinton to augment a force of 1,200 who have been conducting war games in the desert since August.

"The bad news is that we have to do it," said Army Col. Robert Pollard. Saddam "continues to flex his muscles, therefore we have to continue to deploy our forces, first to keep the peace in the region and secondly to protect national interests in the region."

U.S. troops checked out tanks and other armored vehicles that have been stored at Camp Doha, outside the capital, before heading out to the site of the war games.

Nearby, another contingent of U.S. troops manned a Patriot missile battery, its desert-brown launchers pointed toward Iraq.

Most of the U.S. personnel are deployed on about 35 ships in the Gulf, including two aircraft carriers, the USS Enterprise and the USS Carl Vinson.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are the only Gulf states hosting large numbers of American forces, with several thousand U.S. personnel in each country.

Iraq has been using radar to track U.S. aircraft patrolling the "no-fly" zones over northern and southern Iraq, but it has not fired on any planes in the past week.

The zones were established at the end of the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south.

In Washington, CIA Director John Deutch said the Kurdish faction leader who forged a temporary alliance with Saddam Hussein late last month to rout a rival Kurdish faction is now seeking U.S. protection.

"Mr. (Massoud) Barzani is urgently asking for our assistance to make sure that he doesn't become too dependent on Saddam Hussein," Deutch said.

Barzani met with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau in Turkey on Wednesday.

Deutch also told the Senate Intelligence Committee that sanctions imposed after the Gulf War haven't weakened Saddam's hold on power and Iraq's military might still threatens its neighbors.

Saddam's position in the region actually has strengthened recently, he said.

Meanwhile, the exact number of dead and wounded remained in dispute Friday following Wednesday's shelling of a refugee camp in northwest Iran that's hosting Iraqi Kurds who fled the recent turmoil.

Iran claims eight Kurdish refugees were killed and they blame the Iraqi army and the allied Kurdistan Democratic Party.

In Geneva, Christiane Berthiaume, spokeswoman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, said 11 refugees were killed in the bombardment of the Siran Band camp and 46 were wounded and taken to the hospital.

The international humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders said 10 people were killed and 43 wounded.

On the Iraqi side of the border, a Kurdistan Democratic Party commander denied shelling the Iranian camp.

"That's all lies. We haven't attacked that camp," Ghazi Atrushi said. "We have strict orders not to attack the refugee camps."

Iran said the camp shelters about 35,000 Iraqi Kurd refugees.

The latest crisis in Iraq erupted Aug. 31 when Saddam sent troops to help the Kurdistan Democratic Party take control of the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq. The Americans responded with cruise missile strikes on military targets in southern Iraq.

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^BC-Kuwait-US Troops

^New Troops Prepare For War Games Near Iraq Border<

^With BC-Iraq<

^By ANDREW SELSKY=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait (AP) _ The vanguard of U.S. troop reinforcements arriving in Kuwait started checking out Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles Thursday as they prepared to deploy close to the Iraqi border.

Hundreds of the M1-A1 tanks and Bradleys are parked at the U.S. military staging post at Camp Doha west of Kuwait city, ready to participate in war games near the frontier.

After examining the vehicles, the 200 soldiers of the Fort Hood, Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division were to drive them out overnight, joining 1,200 other U.S. soldiers who have been here since August.

Earlier, the reinforcements had arrived at Kuwait International Airport in a civilian chartered plane.

Wearing green fatigues and armed with M-16 rifles and other weapons, they hopped off the plane into the searing heat and went into formation.

U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker was among officials, including Kuwaiti commanders, who greeted the troops.

“America lives up to its commitments, it stands by its friends and the 1st Cavalry is the unit that’s just put the iron into that commitment,” Crocker said.

“There are a lot of Kuwaitis in this city that are going to sleep better tonight because the 1st Cavalry is here.”

One of the U.S. commanders present, Maj. Gen. Robert Ivany, said “we’re here to show resolve and show deterrence and I can’t think of a better force to do it.”

The 200 soldiers who arrived Thursday are part of a force of about 3,500 reinforcements that is heading for the emirate.

By the time they have all arrived, there will be 115 tanks, 56 Bradleys and thousands of U.S. troops participating in the war games.

The military exercises were planned before the current crisis over Iraq erupted, but they have since been expanded to include the reinforcements.

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^New U.S. Troops Deployed Near Iraq, More on the Way<

^Eds: UPDATES with U.S. troops on training exercises in Kuwaiti desert, quotes, color, minor editing to trim.<

^AP Photos Available<

^By ANDREW SELSKY=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUWAIT (AP) - American soldiers fanned out across the desert for live-fire exercises near the Iraqi border Friday, and more troops were on the way as the United States kept the pressure on Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

The confrontation between the United States and Iraq has eased in the past week, but the Americans have continued their buildup in the Gulf.

More than 30,000 U.S. military personnel will soon be in the Gulf compared to fewer than 20,000 before the crisis erupted three weeks ago.

Two planeloads of American soldiers arrived in Kuwait Thursday from Fort Hood, Texas, and more were expected over the next few days. Some 3,500 soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division were ordered to Kuwait by President Clinton to augment a force of 1,200 who have been conducting war games in the desert since August.

"The bad news is that we have to do it," said Army Col. Robert Pollard. Saddam "continues to flex his muscles, therefore we have to continue to deploy our forces, first to keep the peace in the region and secondly to protect national interests in the region."

U.S. troops checked out tanks and other armored vehicles that have been stored at Camp Doha, outside the capital, before heading out to the site of the war games.

Nearby, another contingent of U.S. troops manned a Patriot missile battery, its desert-brown launchers pointed toward Iraq.

Most of the U.S. personnel are deployed on about 35 ships in the Gulf, including two aircraft carriers, the USS Enterprise and the USS Carl Vinson.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are the only Gulf states hosting large numbers of American forces, with several thousand U.S. personnel in each country.

"It was kind of hard for me to come over here, but we've got a job to do," said Sgt. King Pollard, a veteran of the Gulf War.

"When you get back home, what gets you the most are the changes in your kids. You say 'Are these really mine?' You hardly recognize them," said Pollard, a father of three who is based in Fort Lewis, Wash.

Iraq has been using radar to track U.S. aircraft patrolling the "no-fly" zones over northern and southern Iraq, but it has not fired on any planes in the past week.

The zones were established at the end of the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south.

In Washington, CIA Director John Deutch said the Kurdish faction leader who forged a temporary alliance with Saddam Hussein late last month to rout a rival Kurdish faction is now seeking U.S. protection.

"Mr. (Massoud) Barzani is urgently asking for our assistance to make sure that he doesn't become too dependent on Saddam Hussein," Deutch said.

Barzani met with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau in Turkey on Wednesday.

Deutch also told the Senate Intelligence Committee that sanctions imposed after the Gulf War haven't weakened Saddam's hold on power and Iraq's military might still threatens its neighbors.

Saddam's position in the region actually has strengthened recently, he said.

In another development, there were conflicting claims Thursday about the shelling of a refugee camp in northwest Iran that's hosting Iraqi Kurds who fled the recent turmoil.

Iran claims eight Kurdish refugees were killed Wednesday, and they blame the Iraqi army and the allied Kurdistan Democratic Party.

In Geneva, the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said 11 refugees were wounded at the Siran Band camp, but it could not confirm any deaths.

But the international humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders said 10 people were killed and 43 wounded by artillery rounds. The organization said a two-member team witnessed the attack while setting up a dispensary at the camp.

On the Iraqi side of the border, a Kurdistan Democratic Party commander denied shelling the Iranian camp.

"That's all lies. We haven't attacked that camp," Ghazi Atrush said. "We have strict orders not to attack the refugee camps."

Iran said the camp shelters about 35,000 Iraqi Kurd refugees.

The latest crisis in Iraq erupted Aug. 31 when Saddam sent troops to help the Kurdistan Democratic Party take control of the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq. The Americans responded with cruise missile strikes on military targets in southern Iraq.

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^Turkish Prime Minister Breaks Silence Over Iraq Crisis<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ In his first public statements on the recent crisis in Iraq, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said Turkey does not share the U.S. concern about Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein being in power.

"This is not our problem. We have no quarrel with any person in Baghdad," he told a luncheon with Turkish newspaper editors on Thursday. "That is the only concern of the United States."

The interview was reported Friday by the Ankara-based Turkish Daily News.

Erbakan wanted to improve relations with Iraq shortly before the latest crisis broke. He sent two of his ministers to Baghdad last month and they were received by Saddam.

Erbakan also suggested that one of the leading Iraqi Kurdish faction leaders, Jalal Talabani, should "also be respected" in efforts to reach a peaceful solution in northern Iraq.

Talabani's alliance with Iran led a rival group to turn to Saddam for aid last month. The Kurdistan Democratic Party proceeded to drive Talabani's group out of northern Iraq.

Before the fighting, the Iraqi Kurds had maintained an autonomous state in northern Iraq since the end of Gulf War with the protection of a U.S.-led allied coalition force.

Erbakan, the first Turkish leader to come from an Islamic party, criticized the United States for not having a clear policy in northern Iraq.

"It seems the United States is undecided on what it actually wants here," he said.

Erbakan said Turkey would allow the allied operations to continue but only under Turkey's terms. The mission is based at a southern Turkish base.

"We are not against it but we want it to operate according to our own terms," he added.

The U.S. military coordination center was pulled out of northern Iraq after the latest turmoil in northern Iraq.

Although Washington said the center was relocated only temporarily, Turkey does not want the center to return to northern Iraq.

Turkey has accused the allies of helping private aid groups that assisted Turkish Kurdish rebels. The Kurdistan Workers Party, which was not involved in the Iraqi fighting, has been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey from bases in Iraq.

Erbakan said Turkey had two priorities regarding the Iraqi situation. "One is the elimination of the PKK and the other is increasing trade with Iraq and the people in northern Iraq."

Turkey lost dlr 27 billion from the closure of a joint oil pipeline and the halting of trade with Iraq because of the U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

Turkey wants a U.N. decision to reopen the pipeline to be put into effect and also to be granted an exemption from the embargo.

The latest turmoil flared just weeks before the pipeline was to open. But the United Nations postponed its opening.

Erbakan has remained silent about Washington's latest confrontation with Iraq. But he has let his close aides openly criticize the United States.

"At times when you remain silent you are also giving a message," Erbakan said. "Remaining silent can be a very effective attitude."

Erbakan, who heads the first Islamic-led government in the history of the Turkish republic and has been known for his anti-American rhetoric, refused to interrupt his weekend to see U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry in Ankara on Monday.

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^U.S. Troops Stage War Games Near Iraqi Border<

^Eds: SUBS 14th graf to ADD Patriot missiles also deployed.<

^AP Photos KUW101-104<

^By ANDREW SELSKY=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUWAIT (AP) _ In a show of U.S. resolve against Saddam Hussein, American troops opened up with automatic weapons as armored vehicles fired live artillery rounds into the desert sand near the Iraqi border in war games Friday.

The hail of shrapnel and bullets was Washington's message to the Iraqi leader: do not threaten your neighbors again.

While the latest confrontation between the United States and Iraq has eased in the past week, the White House is continuing its military buildup in the Gulf.

Hundreds of soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division arrived in Kuwait on Friday, part of an airlift bringing 3,500 soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, to Kuwait within a few days. President Clinton ordered them to Kuwait to augment a force of 1,200 that has been conducting exercises since August.

More than 30,000 U.S. military personnel, most aboard ships, will soon be in the Gulf. Before the crisis erupted three weeks ago, fewer than 20,000 were deployed.

The United States says the intent of the military exercises is to show Saddam the United States is ready to protect its oil-rich allies in the Gulf.

"It is a great opportunity to realistically do the same mission we may be called on to do in combat," Army Capt. Shane O'Kelly of New York City told reporters as armored vehicles rumbled past, kicking up plumes of sand.

Simulating a counterattack by "enemy" forces about six miles (10 kms) from the Iraqi border, a platoon of American soldiers in a trench triggered a Claymore mine and fired live ammunition from M-16s and a .50 caliber machine gun. The targets were cutout figures of green-uniformed troops.

A half-dozen Bradley Fighting Vehicles raced across the desert past a group of camels, which appeared oblivious to the action.

The Bradleys stopped, swiveled their turrets and fired their cannons. Two A-10 Warthog warplanes screamed overhead but did not use their weapons.

Suddenly, a soldier shouted, "Gas!" The troops pulled gas masks from their pouches and pulled them over their heads. One soldier, one of two "wounded" in the mock firefight, was hauled out of the trench on a poncho and taken to an ambulance on tracks.

Iraq has six divisions of troops in southern Iraq. No threatening movements have been seen, said Lt. Col. Andy Bourland, a U.S. military spokesman in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Iraq has been using radar to track U.S. aircraft patrolling the "no-fly" zones over northern and southern Iraq, but it has not fired on any planes in the past week. The zones were established at the end of the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south.

Most personnel are deployed on about 35 ships in the Gulf, including two aircraft carriers, the USS Enterprise and the USS Carl Vinson. The United States also sent eight radar-evading F117A fighter-bombers and a Patriot missile battery to Kuwait in recent days.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are the only Gulf states hosting large numbers of American forces, with several thousand U.S. personnel in each country.

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^Newspaper: U.S. Seeks Kurds' Secession From Iraq<

^With Iraq<

^By HAMZA HENDAWI=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq accused the United States on Saturday of working for the secession of the country's Kurdish north, where the Iraqi government asserted control this month for the first time in five years.

An editorial in the government daily al-Jumhuriya said Washington's actions were a reaction to the ``master stroke delivered to the centers of conspiracy which the United States depended on in the north of Iraq.''

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein sent his army into northern Iraq late in August to support one Kurdish faction _ the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Massoud Barzani _ against its rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

With Saddam's help, the KDP routed Jalal Talabani's PUK and now controls most of the region.

The United States and its Western allies declared northern Iraq ``safe haven'' for Iraq's Kurds after the Gulf War coalition drove Saddam's forces from Kuwait in 1991.

The United States retaliated against Iraq for intervening in northern Iraq with missile strikes on Sept. 3 and 4 and has been massing troops, planes and ships in the Gulf against any potential threat to Iraq's neighbors from Saddam.

``There is a deliberate American effort to separate Iraq's north from the rest of the country,''' al-Jumhuriya said in its editorial, signed by editor in chief Salah al-Mukhtar.

``What happened in the past three weeks has proven without a shred of doubt that America has worked and mobilized its resources ... to divide Iraq. But the will of the Iraqi people, both Arabs and Kurds, has foiled the scheme.''

Al-Jumhuriya, which like the rest of Iraq's media reflects government thinking, has in the past three weeks been jubilantly reporting Saddam's efforts to reassert his control over the Kurdish north.

The media also have been giving prominence to reports of government food and fuel stocks again being made available in the north. State-run television and radio have been airing Kurdish songs and dances.

And residents of Baghdad, the capital, say there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people seen in public wearing traditional Kurdish costumes _ baggy trousers for men and brightly colored dresses for women.

The future of northern Iraq, patrolled by U.S. and allied warplanes since 1991 to enforce the no-fly zone, has become of paramount interest to Washington and neighboring Turkey and Iran _ home to sizeable Kurdish minorities _ since the KDP's victory.

Turkey, which has been fighting Kurdish guerrillas seeking an independent Kurdish state inside Turkey, opposes the creation of an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

``We are confident that the Iraqi Kurdish parties are convinced that the only practical solution with a chance of success for the problem of north Iraq is for it to return to the great Iraqi homeland, especially after the very bitter experience of the past five years,''' al-Jumhuriya said.

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^Turkey Says No Change Over Its Iraqi Policy<

^Eds: RECASTS and UPDATES thruout with official Turkish statement.<

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey on Sunday said that Iraq could restore its authority in the northern part of the country only if it complied with the U.N. Security Council resolutions dictated after the Gulf War.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said in a written statement that there was a need to "clarify Turkey's position once again" after the publication of a newspaper report that could lead to "serious misunderstandings" over the matter.

"There is no change in Turkey's position ...," Mrs. Ciller said. "There is no basic difference between the U.S. and Turkish stance."

The New York Times reported on Saturday that Mrs. Ciller has urged Saddam Hussein to assert control over northern Iraq.

The newspaper quoted Ciller as saying "we have sent a delegation to Saddam (Hussein) to tell him that if he can impose central authority there, OK."

"Iraq has to meet all its obligations cited under the U.N. Security Council resolutions to restore its authority in northern Iraq," Mrs. Ciller's statement said.

"We never asked from the Iraqi government to send troops in the no-fly zone. We did not even make a hint of it," she added.

Mrs. Ciller repeated Turkey's long-standing position that her country was not happy with the power vacuum in northern Iraq, which the Kurdistan Workers Party uses as a base for launching hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of its war for an autonomous region in the southeast of the country.

"There is a need for a local authority in the northern lands of Iraq until Iraq regains its sovereignty in the entire northern region," Mrs. Ciller said. She said the local authority should be shared by the local population, including Kurds and Turkmens.

Mrs. Ciller said Turkey would rather have the forces of one of the Iraqi Kurdish groups, led by Massoud Barzani, wipe out the Turkish Kurdish rebels in the area. "Turkey is ready to assist him for this purpose," she said.

But she said Turkey was also ready to take all the necessary measures on its own to stop the PKK's "terrorist activities" originating from northern Iraq.

Turkey announced an intention to declare a security zone across the border after the latest turmoil in northern Iraq, when Barzani turned to Baghdad for help to beat a rival group.

Turkey stages land and air operations in northern Iraq to crack down on the PKK several times a year.

Ciller said in the Friday interview that Turkey would continue to allow U.S. jets to take off from Turkish bases to patrol "no-fly" zones over Iraq.

A senior U.S. State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Times that Ciller's remarks do not reflect what Turkey said to U.S. officials earlier.

On Aug. 31, Saddam sent troops to help a Kurdish faction oust a rival Iran-backed Kurdish group in northern Iraq. The Americans responded by firing cruise missiles on military targets in southern Iraq.

Ciller told the paper that the lack of authority in northern Iraq has been "tragic" for Turkey, and that it is that state of affairs that had led the country to seek Saddam's assistance.

Mrs. Ciller, a former prime minister, has had the leading role in the government throughout the latest turmoil in northern Iraq.

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Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who wants to normalize ties with Iraq and start trade with it, remained mostly quiet.

Turkey lost \$27 billion after the closure of joint oil pipeline and the loss of trade with Iraq after the United Nations imposed an economic embargo against Baghdad following its invasion of Kuwait six years ago.

Erbakan said in his first statement over the issue Thursday that Turkey had two priorities regarding the Iraqi situation. "One is the elimination of the PKK and the other is increasing trade with Iraq and the people in northern Iraq."

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^Turkey Says No Change Over Its Iraqi Policy<

^Eds: INSERTS graf 7 to expand on Security Council resolutions.<

^By ZEYNEP ALEMDAR=

^Associated Press Writer=

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The resolutions include an obligation to refrain from oppressing the Kurdish population.

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^Precede KUWAIT<

^Planes From Carrier Enterprise Join The Iraq Watch<

^Eds: UPDATES throughout with color from aircraft carrier, military spokesman saying no Iraqi radar surveillance in past two days. TRIMS outdated material. Hnarakis cq.<

^AP Photos KUW101-104<

^By ANDREW SELSKY=

^Associated Press Writer=

ABOARD THE USS ENTERPRISE (AP) _ U.S. warplanes roared off the deck of the Enterprise to patrol the skies over Iraq on Saturday, fully loaded to retaliate if they're fired on.

Commander Alex Hnarakis, chief of the aircraft carrier's squadron of F-14B Tomcat jet fighters, said pilots were scoping out potential targets in case Iraq fires at U.S. planes again or takes other offensive action.

The Enterprise arrived in the Gulf on Thursday. On Saturday, its planes joined others _ some from a second carrier in the Gulf, the USS Carl Vinson _ patrolling the no-fly zones over Iraq.

Although U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry promised a "disproportionate" response to Iraq's Sept. 11 missile attack on U.S. planes, Washington cooled its rhetoric after finding many of its allies disapproved.

The latest confrontation with Iraq began three weeks ago when Saddam sent his troops into a Western-protected safe haven in northern Iraq. The United States responded by destroying Iraqi air-defense installations and extending the reach of a no-fly zone over southern Iraq.

Iraq has an array of radar-guided surface-to-air missiles and Mi fighter planes and is fully capable of downing an American plane.

U.S. helicopter-borne search-and-rescue teams were on the ready in Kuwait to retrieve any downed airmen. Amid the confrontation with Iraq, Washington also ordered a Patriot missile battery, eight radar-evading F-117 fighter-bombers and 3,000 U.S. troops to the desert emirate.

As the Enterprise's Tomcat pilots broke up a mission briefing, strapped on survival gear and headed for their planes, Hnarakis told a reporter that if the Iraqis fired more missiles, striking at the launchers alone would be insufficient retaliation.

"Shooting at anti-air is like shooting at the arrow, not at the archer," he said. "Command bunkers, air defense operations centers _ the places where the people who gather the raw information and do the decision-making, you'd certainly want to be hitting stuff like that."

No attacks by Iraq has been reported since the missile firing earlier this month, which hit no allied aircraft.

In the Saudi Arabian capital, Riyadh, U.S. military spokesman Lt Col. Andrew Bourland said Iraq's military "has been very quiet" over the last two days, with no radar surveillance of the U.S. warplanes flying over the country.

Aboard the Enterprise, Cmdr. Peter Frano, leader of the ship's A-6 Intruder squadron and a Gulf War veteran, believes the U.S. show of force is necessary to warn off Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

"You have to be careful with this man," said Frano. "We don't know if he's planning something else. That's why we're here."

The Enterprise's voyage marks the first time F-14B planes, normally used in air-to-air combat, are equipped to strike targets on land with laser-guided bombs, Hnarakis said. And it also marks one of the last times that A-6 Intruder planes, which are being phased out, will be used in military missions.

The Enterprise had been in the Adriatic, its planes patrolling no-fly zones over former Yugoslavia, when it was ordered to set sail for the Gulf.

Also Saturday, another 300 U.S. soldiers were flown into Kuwait, raising to 3,000 the number of American troops deployed in the small emirate to protect it and to keep up the pressure on Saddam.

They are part of a ground-troop buildup that began Thursday after U.S. President Bill Clinton ordered thousands more troops to head to the Gulf.

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^Turkey Denies Encouraging Saddam To Re-impose Authority<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey on Sunday denied reports that it had encouraged Saddam Hussein to side with a Kurdish faction to re-impose its authority over northern Iraq.

"We haven't told anyone, 'Come, take Irbil,'" Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan told reporters.

Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani, in what he has called a one-time deal, asked Saddam to help him capture the biggest Kurdish city, Irbil, from his rival on Aug. 31. The taking of the city led to further victories by Barzani, who largely drove his rival's forces from the region.

"We have been watching all these developments taking place outside our domain," Erbakan said. "We were surprised by the Irbil incident. Turkey does not get involved in anyone's internal affairs."

The New York Times reported on Saturday that Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller has urged Saddam Hussein to assert control over northern Iraq.

Mrs. Ciller said in a written statement Sunday that there was a need to "clarify Turkey's position once again" after the publication of a report that could lead to "serious misunderstandings" over the matter.

"There is no change in Turkey's position ...," Mrs. Ciller said. "There is no basic difference between the U.S. and Turkish stance."

"Iraq has to meet all its obligations cited under the U.N. Security Council resolutions to restore its authority in northern Iraq," Mrs. Ciller's statement said.

The resolutions include an obligation to refrain from oppressing the Kurdish population.

The newspaper quoted Ciller as saying "We have sent a delegation to Saddam (Hussein) to tell him that if he can impose central authority there, OK."

Jalal Talabani, the defeated Iraqi Kurdish leader, blamed the Turkish government for brokering the collaboration between his rival and Saddam, a Turkish daily reported Sunday.

"Ankara sent two ministers to Baghdad to offer a three-way alliance between Barzani, Turkey and Iraq," Talabani told the Turkish daily Milliyet during an interview at the Zeli camp near the Iranian border.

"When Saddam's tanks rolled into Irbil, America told us they couldn't hit Iraq because Turkey and France were not allowing it," Talabani was quoted by Milliyet as saying.

A U.S.-led allied air force including French jets are based in southern Turkey to enforce a no-fly zone in northern Iraq, set up after the Gulf War to protect the Kurds from Saddam.

Mrs. Ciller repeated Turkey's long-standing position that her country was not happy with the power vacuum in northern Iraq, which the Kurdistan Workers Party uses as a base for launching hit-and-run attacks inside Turkey as part of its war for an autonomous region in the southeast of the country.

"There is a need for a local authority in the northern lands of Iraq until Iraq regains its sovereignty in the entire northern region," Mrs. Ciller said. She said the authority should be shared by the local population, including Kurds and Turkmen.

Mrs. Ciller said Turkey would rather have Barzani's forces wipe out the Turkish Kurdish rebels in the area. "Turkey is ready to assist him for this purpose," she said.

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Turkey stages land and air operations in northern Iraq to crack down on the PKK several times a year.

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Her pro-western center-right party is the junior coalition partner in the Islamic-led government of Erbakan.

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^U.S. Says Saddam 'Backing Off'<

^By DONALD M. ROTHBERG=

^AP Diplomatic Writer=

STOCKHOLM (AP) _ Signaling an easing of tensions in the Gulf, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said Sunday that one of two U.S. aircraft carriers in the region might leave next month.

"All the evidence I've seen the last four or five days is positive," Perry said on a flight from Finland to Sweden. "I truly believe Iraq is backing off the threatening actions they were taking a week ago. But we will watch it very carefully, very carefully, every day, every hour."

If there is no increase in tension, the USS Carl Vinson could leave the Middle East next month and return to its home port in Washington state, he said.

Perry, in northern Europe to confer with his counterparts and attend a NATO meeting in Norway, said the 5,000 U.S. troops now engaged in war games in Kuwait will remain several months to complete their training.

"We have no plans at this time to send any more forces than we've already sent in," said Perry. When the training exercise in Kuwait ends, he said, "we'll take a look at what the situation is."

With the help of the Iraqi army, one Kurdish faction swept through northern Iraq and now controls virtually all of the Kurdish safe haven established by the United States and its allies in 1991 to protect the Kurds from Saddam.

The United States responded with missile strikes on Sept. 3 and 4, and extended the no-fly zone over southern Iraq. The United States has pressed ahead with a military buildup.

The Iraqi army fired several missiles at U.S. warplanes patrolling over Iraq on Sept. 11 and 12, but did not hit any. In the face of criticism from many U.S. allies, the administration backed off any counterattack.

In an interview on Fox television Sunday, Nizar Hamdoun, Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, said the U.S. troops in Kuwait "are only going to raise the tension in the area." Saddam's Aug. 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait started a process that led to a 100-hour ground war in February 1991 to drive the Iraqis out.

He said Iraq wants "some sort of dialogue between the two governments. I think there are lots of ways to try to figure out how to get an improvement to the situation, to lessen the tension."

On the same network, Washington's U.N. ambassador, Madeleine Albright, said the United States would agree to allow Iraqi oil sales for humanitarian purposes only after the situation in northern Iraq has become "such that allows the United Nations to feel comfortable enough to send in monitors."

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^Christopher Welcomes Turkish Assurances On Ties To Saddam<

^By ROBERT BURNS=

^Associated Press Writer=

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher welcomed assurances by Turkey's foreign minister Monday that her country supports U.S. policy on Iraq and is not encouraging Saddam Hussein to extend his influence in northern Iraq.

“As a result of today's meeting, Turkey and the United States firmly agree that Saddam's influence in northern Iraq should be minimized,” State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said after Christopher spoke with Tansu Ciller.

Christopher and Mrs. Ciller were in New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly. He was meeting later with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, and the matter of President Boris Yeltsin's heart trouble was expected to arise.

In Washington, President Clinton said he was not worried that Yeltsin's health problems will destabilize the government since the former Communist nation had “come a long way in developing the constitutional mechanism of authority.”

“They have worked out the relationships that will exist between President Yeltsin and Prime Minister (Viktor) Chernomyrdin,” Clinton said. “I feel comfortable right now that our relationships will proceed on a normal course and a positive one.”

Before her 40-minute meeting with Christopher at a New York hotel, Mrs. Ciller told reporters she had been misunderstood in a New York Times interview last Friday as saying her government was talking with Saddam about establishing enough control in northern Iraq to chase out Turkish Kurds waging a separatist guerrilla war against Turkey.

“We are worried about the security of our borders,” she said, speaking English. “We want to stop the influx of refugees through our borders. But we cannot ask Saddam to do that for us,” because of limitations imposed by U.N. resolutions.

“We have lived up to all that was asked from us by the United States,” she added.

Burns said Ciller's earlier reported remarks “caused some anxiety in Washington,” since the Clinton administration is striving to reduce Saddam's influence in the region and has resorted to military action to hem him in further.

Christopher was satisfied that Turkey is not collaborating with Saddam, Burns said.

Mrs. Ciller told Christopher that Turkish Kurds, known as the PKK, who are fighting a separatist war from bases in northern Iraq, are increasing their attacks on Turkish government forces, killing an average of three soldiers a day.

To block cross-border incursions by the Kurdish rebels, Turkey has established a “security zone” in northern Iraq. Burns said Christopher told Ciller the Clinton administration did not object to that so long as it was not permanent.

“He said the United States will continue to support the Turkish security zone, that our understanding is that it would be temporary in duration, and Mrs. Ciller concurred in that,” Burns said.

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^Christopher Announces 'Milestone' Missile Defense Deal<

^Eds: RECAPS previous; UPDATES with Christopher-Primakov statements on defense agreement.<

^By ROBERT BURNS=

^Associated Press Writer=

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his Russian counterpart announced a 'milestone' agreement clarifying the legality of certain American weapons used to defend against slower-flying ballistic missiles.

'This important progress assures that we can effectively defend against theater ballistic missiles while ensuring the integrity of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty,' Christopher said Monday after meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

'We reached a milestone,' he said.

Washington and Moscow have argued for years over identifying those anti-missile defensive systems, such as the U.S. Army's Patriot air defense system, that are allowed under the 1972 ABM Treaty and those capable of shooting down long-range missiles, which are expressly limited under the treaty.

Lynn Davis, a State Department official, told reporters later that Christopher and Primakov had confirmed a detailed agreement worked out in June and that they expect the documents to be formally signed by the end of October.

In practical terms, Ms. Davis said, the accord clarifies the legality of a new-generation anti-missile system under development by the Pentagon called the Theater High Altitude Area Defense system, which is designed to shoot down incoming ballistic missiles at far greater ranges than the Patriot is capable of.

The deal applies to those anti-missile missiles that fly at speeds no greater than 3 kilometers per second. Discussions on faster-flying missiles will be the next step, the officials said. Those talks are to begin in October.

Primakov, appearing before reporters with Christopher, said the accord will have a 'significant, positive effect' on debate in the Russian Duma, the national legislature, on ratifying the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty which the U.S. Congress already has ratified.

In their 3 1/2-hour meeting at a New York hotel, Christopher and Primakov also discussed but reached no new agreements on NATO's expansion plans, Russia's relations with NATO, the Bosnian elections and the situation in Iraq, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

Earlier Monday, Christopher welcomed assurances by Turkey's foreign minister that her country supports U.S. policy on Iraq and is not encouraging Saddam Hussein to extend his influence in northern Iraq.

"As a result of today's meeting, Turkey and the United States firmly agree that Saddam's influence in northern Iraq should be minimized," Burns told reporters.

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"We are worried about the security of our borders," she said, speaking English. "We want to stop the influx of refugees through our borders. But we cannot ask Saddam to do that for us," because of limitations imposed by U.N. resolutions.

"We have lived up to all that was asked from us by the United States," she added.

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"He said the United States will continue to support the Turkish security zone, that our understanding is that it would be temporary in duration, and Mrs. Ciller concurred in that," Burns said.

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^BC-Iraq-Giving Up Guns<

^Massive Disarmament Program To Make Life Safer, Barzani Stronger<

^AP Photos IRB101,102,103<

^By TONY SMITH=

^Associated Press Writer=

KHALADIN, Iraq (AP) - The trashed houses of the wealthy Sourchi clan in this mountain village are proof that short-lived alliances, treachery, family feuds and bloody revenge killings - all hallmarks of Kurdish history - are still alive in these rugged passes and deep gorges tracing the centuries-old silk route.

For now, Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party, aided by Saddam Hussein, has won the upper hand across Iraqi Kurdistan by driving his rival Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan across the border into Iran. But can he keep control?

Wary of the fractiousness that plunged his people into civil war two years ago, Barzani is starting a massive disarmament program to make life safer for ordinary Kurds but also to weaken his political opponents.

One of the first steps Barzani took after expelling Talabani's PUK Sept. 10, was to close arms bazaars in towns and cities under his control.

The next step is to disarm militias run by the various parties, confiscate their weapons and unify regional army. Then, police are to perform house searches

to turn up any stray or hidden guns and materiel, KDP officials say. It is to clamp down on violent crime and political infighting in a region where more than 100,000 men currently bear arms, according to Premier-designate Roj Nouri.

"The program should allow us to create a normal civic life, where citizens' security and property can be guaranteed," Nouri told The AP in an interview.

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"No party should have a militia, not even the KDP. All must be equal before the law," he added.

But as first among equals, it is the triumphant KDP that is dishing out cabinet posts to Islamic, Communist, and ethnic Turcoman and Assyrian parties but has excluded the PUK. The KDP is almost certain to take control of the freshly created ministry for Peshmerga, or military.

Local KDP branches are charged with collecting weapons from other parties' militias.

So far, the plan seems to be working.

In the Iraqi Kurdish capital of Irbil, guns are no longer on show at the main bazaar. And due to the slump in demand, even the price of a Chinese-built Kalashnikov available under the counter has dropped 50 percent to 4,000 Iraqi dinars (dlns 160).

In Diyanah, a small silk route town famed until weeks ago for its abundant selection of machine guns, pistols, night sight binoculars, hand and even rocket-propelled grenades, the arms market is dusty and deserted.

The battered metal doors on surrounding shacks are chained and padlocked. The KDP branch has collected nearly 2,000 guns from former PUK supporters, said young local party official Abdulwahid Guani.

"Before, militias would kill each other left, right and center like cowboys, and there were thieves around like Ali Baba," said Abdurrahman Molla Rasul, a KDP soldier in Diyanah. "If we have a real government, we don't need guns. We don't want Ali Babas round here any more."

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"Talabani finish, Ali Baba finish!" he added, switching from rapid-fire Kurdish to broken English.

According to Rasul, one such Ali Baba was Aga Hussein Sourchi, a local millionaire merchant who lived and died in Khaladin at the top of a nearby pass where bandits have waylaid silk-laden travelers for centuries.

Sourchi was killed last June when KDP forces attacked the village. Local commander Brig. Muhamad Said Hassan said Sourchi and 15 KDP fighters were killed in a firefight. Other Kurds whisper that Barzani had Sourchi executed in front of family members. Their houses were razed. One faction of the clan fled, the other, loyal to the KDP, stayed.

Sourchi's nephew had been collaborating with the PUK and was sabotaging KDP actions from the village, well inside KDP territory at the time, Hassan said.

"He wanted to hand over this area to the PUK. It was a conspiracy. He was a chameleon," concluded the brigadier, a jovial veteran of the Iran-Iraq war and Kurdish infighting.

"These people have no principles," he said.

Asked if Barzani could hold sway over the various Kurdish factions that still exist despite Talabani's flight, Hassan said he was confident in his leader.

But he warned: "Anything is possible. Talabani came from nowhere to create problems for the immortal mullah Mustafa (Barzani's father) and for his son. Let's hope history does not repeat itself."

(ts)

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^BC-Iraq-Giving Up Guns<

^Massive Disarmament Program To Make Life Safer, Barzani Stronger<

^AP Photos IRB101,102,103<

^By TONY SMITH=

^Associated Press Writer=

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The next step is to disarm militias run by the various parties, confiscate their weapons and merge some of their members into a unified regional army. Then, police are to perform house searches to turn up any stray or hidden guns and materiel, KDP officials say.

The aim is to clamp down on violent crime and political infighting in a region where more than 100,000 men currently bear arms, according to Premier-designate Roj Nouri.

"The program should allow us to create a normal civic life, where citizens' security and property can be guaranteed," Nouri told The AP in an interview.

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^Turkish Foreign Minister Calls for Iraq Sanctions Compensation, EU Membership<

^By SLOBODAN LEKIC=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) — Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller asked the West Thursday to compensate her country for dlr 27 billion in losses it incurred in complying with U.N. economic sanctions against Iraq.

She also appealed to the European Union to admit Turkey into membership before taking up applications of former communist nations such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

"If we are to have a truly mutual alliance with the West, then you must strive to understand our special needs and problems," said Ciller, who also serves as deputy prime minister in Turkey's coalition government.

Ciller sought to reassure her audience at the National Press Club that Turkey will remain faithful to secularism despite a power-sharing agreement with the Islamic Welfare Party. Welfare's chairman Necmettin Erbakan serves as prime minister and is expected to be replaced by Ciller in mid-1998.

"Turkey stands where it always has and it is still your best friend in a tough neighborhood," Ciller said.

Five years after the Gulf War, Turkey is the only member of the Desert Storm coalition that continues to suffer economic damage, she said.

The pipeline that Turkey and Iraq built jointly before the conflict to connect the oilfields around the northern Iraqi city of Mosul with the Mediterranean has been closed since 1990. Turkey has suffered from continual energy shortages since then, and losses are estimated in Ankara at dlr 27 billion.

The resulting economic recession gave rise to political instability, Ciller said.

"Those in the West who are truly concerned about the future stability of Turkey should look at the damage inflicted on our economy because we stood with you for freedom and against aggression," Ciller said.

She called on the United States to allow its Export-Import Bank to extend further credits to Turkey and said she would discuss other measures with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Ciller also noted that the European Union is now considering accepting into membership several former Warsaw Pact nations. Although the EU already has a customs agreement with Ankara, Turkey is not a candidate for full membership.

"Our application for membership was submitted nine years ago, when the Iron Curtain was still standing," she said. "Think how it looks to Turkey's citizens, after 50 years of helping to defend Europe's frontiers, to be told now that we're somehow not good enough to be part of Europe."

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^Baghdad-Backed Kurdish Faction Frees Prisoners<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A Kurdish faction that seized control of northern Iraq has freed 12 senior officials of a rival faction whom it had captured earlier this month, the group said Saturday.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said it released the men ``in a gesture of goodwill and in the spirit of tolerance'' in Irbil, Iraqi Kurdistan's capital.

In a statement faxed from the KDP's Ankara office, the party said those freed included Dr. Fouad Massoum, a high-level official of the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Massoum was premier of a de-facto Kurdish state established in northern Iraq under the protection of a U.S.-led allied air force after the Gulf War.

The other prisoners were also senior PUK politicians and commanders. The KDP statement said the prisoners were allowed to remain in Iraqi Kurdistan or leave as they wished.

The group, aided by Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army, routed the PUK earlier this month. Thousands of Iraqi Kurds then fled to the hills of nearby Iran. But most of them returned after Saddam declared an amnesty.

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^In Kurdistan, the Victors Launch a Disarmament Program<

^AP Photo NY115<

^By TONY SMITH=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ Hoping to head off further Kurdish infighting Massoud Barzani's victorious faction has launched a disarmament program in northern Iraq to make the region safer _ and his opponents weaker.

One of the first steps Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party took after expelling a rival faction Sept. 10 was to shut down flourishing arms bazaars in northern Iraq.

In Irbil, the capital of the Kurdish region, guns are no longer on show at the main bazaar. And due to a slump in demand, the price of a Chinese-built Kalashnikov rifle available under the counter has dropped 50 percent, to the equivalent of dlr\$ 160.

In Diyanah, a town previously known for its abundant selection of machine guns, pistols, night-vision binoculars, and even rocket-propelled grenades, the arms market is dusty and deserted.

The battered metal doors on surrounding shacks are chained and padlocked. The KDP branch has collected nearly 2,000 guns, said party official Abdulwahid Guani.

"Before, militias would kill each other left, right and center like cowboys," said Abdurrahman Molla Rasul, a KDP soldier in Diyanah. "If we have a real government, we don't need guns."

The Kurds have been rebelling against Iraqi authority for most of this century; most men own weapons and know how to use them.

But Kurdish efforts to achieve autonomy have been repeatedly undermined by chronic infighting, family feuds and bloody revenge killings in the rugged mountains of northern Iraq.

Barzani's disarmament plan should help clamp down on crime and disorder, and it's also likely to reduce the threat of a home-grown rebellion against his rule.

Jalal Talabani, the leader of the defeated Kurdish faction, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, fled to Iran along with his top lieutenants. But there are still many armed groups in the region.

Barzani's aims to disarm the various militias and merge them into a unified regional army. Then, police are to perform house searches to turn up any stray or hidden guns and materiel, KDP officials say.

"The program should allow us to create a normal civic life, where citizens' security and property can be guaranteed," said Roj Nouri, the man chosen by Barzani to be "prime minister" of the Kurdish region.

"No party should have a militia, not even the KDP. All must be equal before the law," he added.

As the first among equals, the triumphant KDP is dishing out government posts to a number of different groups, but not the defeated PUK.

The PUK, in a statement issued Thursday, accused Barzani of showing "absolute disregard for the basic tenants of Kurdish national interests."

Barzani's forces received help from the army of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and the PUK said it was "truly audacious for Barzani to promise democracy and respect for human rights under the shadows of Saddam's tyranny."

In northern Iraq, KDP commander Brig. Mohammed Said Hassan was asked if Barzani could keep the Kurds together, or if they would once again resume their battles.

"Anything is possible," he said. "Let's hope history does not repeat itself."

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^Thousands of Kurds Await Decision on U.S. Help<

WASHINGTON (AP) _ Several thousand Kurds in northern Iraq may get help from the United States in leaving the country. A decision is pending, the U.S. State Department said Wednesday.

Some 2,100 Kurds in northern Iraq who worked for the U.S. government were evacuated to Guam where they are being processed for political asylum in the United States.

The other Kurds who may be evacuated worked for American private voluntary organizations, providing relief and other assistance.

''We don't believe this particular group of people are in any immediate threat because we don't believe Saddam Hussein's influence stretches as far northward as most of them are,'' State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said. But he said the United States was studying the possibility of helping them leave northern Iraq because ''Saddam's security forces have engaged in such outrageous, objectionable behavior in the past.''

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^Kurdish Rebels Claim They Retook Several Towns<

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) _ Kurdish rebels claimed Saturday that they have recaptured several towns in northern Iraq, six weeks after they were defeated by a Baghdad-backed rival Kurdish faction.

There was no independent confirmation of the claim made by Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which came in a statement faxed to The Associated Press.

The group said its fighters recaptured several towns including Panjwin, Mawat and Chuwartah, wresting control from the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party of Massoud Barzani.

The towns form an arc about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of the city of Sulaymaniyah, which is 170 miles (275 kilometers) north of Baghdad.

"The Iraqi-backed Barzani militia were routed from the region after suffering more than 73 killed," the English-language statement said.

The statement did not say if there were any PUK casualties.

There was no immediate reaction to the PUK's claims from the Baghdad government or from the KDP, which took control of the region with Iraqi help in an offensive that began Aug. 30.

Saddam Hussein's intervention on behalf of his favored faction in northern Iraq earned him the ire of the United States, which retaliated with cruise missile attacks on air-defense installations in southern Iraq.

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The group said its fighters recaptured several towns including Panjwin, Mawat and Chuwartah, wresting control from the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party of Massoud Barzani.

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Saddam Hussein's intervention on behalf of his favored faction in northern Iraq earned him the ire of the United States, which retaliated with cruise missile attacks on air-defense installations in southern Iraq.

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^Kurdish Rebels Claim They Retook Several Towns<

^Eds: UPDATES throughout with KDP statement, EDITS to conform, ADDS background.<

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Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press that its fighters recaptured several towns including Panjwin, Mawat and Chuwartah, wresting control from the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The towns form an arc about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of the city of Sulaymaniyah, which is 170 miles (275 kilometers) north of Baghdad.

The KDP of Massoud Barzani later confirmed the fighting in a statement, saying PUK fighters backed with Iranian troops and artillery crossed into northern Iraq from Iran on Friday.

It said the fighting continued Saturday morning and that the KDP had to evacuate Panjwin under heavy Iranian artillery and rocket shelling.

The Arabic-language statement, also faxed to the AP, made no mention of Mawat and Chuwartah, but said KDP forces had repulsed a PUK attack on the nearby locality of Qala Diza.

"The Iraqi-backed Barzani militia were routed from the region after suffering more than 73 killed," the English-language PUK statement said. It did not say if there were any PUK casualties and the KDP statement gave no casualty figures at all.

The KDP, with help from the Iraqi army, took control of Kurdish areas in an offensive that began Aug. 30.

Saddam Hussein's intervention on behalf of the KDP, his favored faction in northern Iraq, earned him the ire of the United States, which retaliated with cruise missile attacks on air-defense installations in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

But his action also gave him influence in the area for the first time since 1991 when the United States and its Gulf War allies declared Iraq's Kurdish areas a safe haven and enforced a no-fly zone above it.

Particularly rewarding for Saddam was the demise of a CIA-backed opposition group which worked for his ouster from the area. Covert Iraqi government agents also are widely suspected to have moved into northern Iraq in big numbers since the KDP took virtual control of the area.

Commenting on the latest fighting, KDP's Saturday statement accused Iran of trying to destabilize the border areas after a period of calm which followed the KDP triumph over the PUK.

"We appeal to the Iranian government to stop its interference in the affairs of the Muslim and peaceful Kurdish people and not to push matters towards escalation," it said.

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URGENT

Rebels Say They Retook Major Kurdish City From Rival Faction

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) - Kurdish rebels early Sunday recaptured a northern Iraqi city seized last month by a rival faction in an offensive that led to U.S. missile strikes near Baghdad, a Kurdish official said.

The city of Sulaymaniyah, the region's second-largest city, was retaken from the forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, a spokesman for the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan told The Associated Press.

The spokesman, reached by telephone at the PUK office in London, declined to be identified and gave no further details.

There was no immediate comment from the rival faction, led by Massoud Barzani, or the Iraqi government.

Forces of the PUK were driven out from Sulaymaniyah, 275 kilometers (170 miles) north of the capital Baghdad, Sept. 9 in a offensive which brought most of northern Iraq under Barzani's control.

The attack began in late August when Barzani's forces captured Irbil, the area's regional capital, from the Iran-backed PUK with the help of the Iraqi army.

The United States retaliated with missile strikes near Baghdad on Sept. 3-4.

The action, however, restored some of the Iraqi president's influence in the area for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War when the United States and its allies declared Iraq's Kurdish area as a safe haven and enforced a no-fly zone above it.

The city of Sulaymaniyah has a population of a little more than one million. Its reported recapture followed a statement made on Saturday that PUK forces backed by Iranian troops and artillery crossed into Iraq from Iran on Friday.

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^Kurdish Rebels Claim They Retook Several Towns in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with KDP confirmation of fighting, 4th graf; ADDS background grafs 10-13; EDITS to conform; CHANGES overline.<

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) _ Kurdish rebels claimed that they had recaptured several towns in northern Iraq on Saturday, six weeks after they were defeated by a rival Kurdish faction backed by Saddam Hussein.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said in a facsimile to the Associated Press that its fighters had recaptured the towns of Panjwin, Mawat and Chuwartah from its rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The towns form an arc about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of the city of Sulaymaniyah, 170 miles (275 kilometers) north of Baghdad.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Massoud Barzani confirmed the fighting in a statement, saying PUK fighters backed with Iranian troops and artillery crossed into northern Iraq from Iran on Friday.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, with help from the Iraqi army, took control of the area in an offensive that began Aug. 30.

It said the fighting continued Saturday morning and that the KDP had to evacuate Panjwin under heavy Iranian artillery and rocket shelling.

The Arabic-language statement, also sent by facsimile to The AP, made no mention of Mawat and Chuwartah, but said KDP forces had repulsed a PUK attack on the nearby locality of Qala Diza.

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The Kurdish Democratic Party accused Iran of trying to destabilize the border areas after a period of calm which followed the KDP triumph over the PUK.

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Saddam Hussein's intervention on behalf of the Kurdistan Democratic Party led to U.S. air strikes on Iraqi air-defense installations in southern Iraq on Sept. 3 and 4.

His action also restored some of the influence in the area for the first time since the Gulf War when the United States and its allies declared Iraq's Kurdish area as a safe haven and enforced a no-fly zone above it.

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^RETRANSMITTING to add editors' note.<

^Rebels Say They Retook Major Kurdish City From Rival Faction<

^Eds: UPDATES throughout with PUK statement, denial by KDP official in Syria, details, background.<

^By HAMZA HENDAWI=

^Associated Press Writer=

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) _ In what appears to be a major counter offensive after a month-long lull, Kurdish rebels said they recaptured early Sunday a northern Iraqi city seized last month by a rival faction backed by Saddam Hussein's army.

A statement by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said its forces entered the city of Sulaymaniyah, the region's second-largest city, at dawn following a "spontaneous uprising" which ejected the forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

It said Massoud Barzani, the KDP leader, fled the city and took refuge in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, which is under the control of the Iraqi government.

Omar al-Bustani, a KDP representative in the Syrian capital Damascus, denied the PUK claim. There was no word immediately available from the Iraqi government.

Forces of the PUK were driven out from Sulaymaniyah, 275 kilometers (170 miles) north of the capital Baghdad, on Sept. 9 in a KDP offensive which began 10 days earlier and brought most of northern Iraq under its control.

The offensive began Aug. 31 when Barzani's forces captured Irbil the area's regional capital, from the Iran-backed PUK with the help of the Iraqi army.

The Iraqi army's intervention was punished with U.S. missile attacks on Sept. 3 and 4 and led to an American military buildup in the Gulf area.

The action, however, restored some of the Iraqi president's influence in the area for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War when the United States and its allies declared Iraq's Kurdish area as a safe haven and enforced a no-fly zone above it.

The PUK statement on Sunday, faxed to The Associated Press in Nicosia, Cyprus, said: "Barzani's elite forces were in total disarray, leaving behind massive amounts of weapons and ammunitions, military hardware and vehicles."

"The liberation of Sulaymaniyah refutes Barzani's claims that the KDP was irreversibly in control over Iraqi Kurdistan."

The city of Sulaymaniyah has a population of a little more than one million. Its reported recapture followed a statement made on Saturday that PUK forces backed by Iranian troops and artillery crossed into Iraq from Iran on Friday and captured several towns and localities.

The PUK, which is led by Jalal Talbani, denies as baseless KDP charges that its latest offensive is backed by troops of Iran's "Revolutionary Guards."

The PUK and the KDP have been on-and-off enemies for years.

The KDP accuses the PUK of having close links with Persian Iran, thus giving Iraq's non-Arab neighbor an unwelcome foothold in the affairs of Iraq's Kurds.

The two factions are also at odds over the distribution of the area's modest revenues, mostly fees paid by Turkish truckers who cross into Iraq from Turkey to buy cheap fuel to sell at a vast profit when they return home.

They also differ over what policies should be adopted in dealing with the Iraqi government, with the KDP favoring finding an accommodation with Baghdad to settle the Kurdish question.

U.S.-led mediation efforts had in the past persuaded the two sides to agree to a truce, but several cease-fires collapsed and fighting resumed.

In a rare show of unity, the two groups temporarily joined force in an uprising against the Iraqi government immediately after the end of the Gulf War. The Iraqi army ruthlessly suppressed the revolt.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld-Writethru<

^Rebels Say They Retook Major Kurdish City From Rival Faction<

^Eds: UPDATES with official Iraqi comment, EDITS to conform.<

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It said Massoud Barzani, the KDP leader, fled the city and took refuge in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, which is under the control of the Iraqi government.

Franso Hariri, a KDP official, confirmed to Turkey's semi-official Anatolia news agency the capture of Sulaymaniyah by the PUK, led by Jalal Talabani.

"We had to retreat from Sulaymaniyah because of Iran's heavy artillery bombardment and rocket attacks," Hariri said from Irbil, provincial capital of Iraq's Kurdish area.

A KDP spokesman in London, however, told the Associated Press by telephone that he could not immediately confirm the PUK claim. "We are checking the report," he said.

In Baghdad, an official statement urged the two groups to settle their differences through talks and sternly warned against what it called "dealing with the foreigner," a reference to the PUK's close ties with neighboring Iran.

The statement was issued after a meeting, chaired by Saddam, of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council and the leadership of the ruling Arab Socialist Baath Party _ the country's highest executive bodies.

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The PUK denies as baseless KDP charges that its latest offensive is backed by troops of Iran's "Revolutionary Guards."

In a radio broadcast monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp. Barzani appealed on Saturday night for help against what he called a brutal Iranian invasion of northern Iraq.

"Iran is carrying out this invasion and Jalal Talabani is collaborating with it. We appeal to all countries in the world to help our people against this brutal invasion," he said.

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The KDP accuses the PUK of having close links with Persian Iran, thus giving Iraq's non-Arab neighbor an unwelcome foothold in the affairs of Iraq's Kurds.

The two factions are also at odds over the distribution of the area's modest revenues, mostly fees paid by Turkish truckers who cross into Iraq from Turkey to buy cheap fuel to sell at a vast profit when they return home.

They also differ over what policies should be adopted in dealing with the Iraqi government, with the KDP favoring finding an accommodation with Baghdad over their demands for autonomy.

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In a rare show of unity, the two temporarily joined forces in an uprising against the Iraqi government immediately after the end of the Gulf War. The Iraqi army ruthlessly suppressed the revolt.

^VARS-HH<

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^Precede NICOSIA<

^Rebels Say They Retook Major Kurdish City From Rival Faction<

^Eds: UPDATES with quotes from Iraqi statement, CHANGES byline.<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

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The statement was issued after a meeting, chaired by Saddam, of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council and the leadership of the ruling Arab Socialist Baath Party _ the country's highest executive bodies.

"We have consistently given severe warnings in the past against dealing with foreign powers. Our stance towards this or that party has and always will be mainly determined in the light of their dealings with foreign powers," the statement said.

"We call upon the parties which have returned to fighting to expel the foreign forces and not to deal with them ... The (Iraqi) leadership is prepared to invite all parties ... to talk in Baghdad. Dialogue is the only way which could bring positive results," it said.

^PUK forces ... puck up 9th graf in 5th Ld-Writethru)

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 4th Ld-Writethru

^Kurdish Rebels Urge Irbil's Residents to Revolt<

^Eds: SUBS graf 14, 'There ... claims' to UPDATE with KDP saying it has set up defensive lines east of Irbil; MOVES DOWN reference to Washington report on rebuilt missile defense system, other editing to conform.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) _ Kurdish rebels said they halted their advance outside northern Iraq's provincial capital of Irbil on Tuesday and urged the population to rebel against a rival, Iraqi-backed faction that controls the city.

The capture of Irbil last month by the Kurdistan Democratic Part was aided by Iraqi troops, but there has been no indication that Saddam Hussein's army has intervened as the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan marched back to the city.

But Turkey's Prime Minister Tansu Ciller said Tuesday, "We are receiving reports about the presence of Iranian troops among PUK forces in northern Iraq."

Saddam's forces are unlikely to remain out of the fray if substantial Iranian involvement in the fighting is confirmed. The two countries fought a war from 1980 to 1988 in which millions died.

Until Mrs. Ciller's statement, only the pro-Baghdad forces had alleged that Iran had sent troops into Iraq.

Mrs. Ciller did not cite the source of her information. Turkey is known to have a sizable intelligence network in northern Iraq.

The PUK and Iran both deny Iranian involvement in the fighting.

A spokesman for the PUK told The Associated Press in Nicosia, Cyprus, that the group's fighters were in control of areas 20 kilometers (12 miles) southwest of Irbil.

Reached by telephone in London, spokesman Lateef Rashid said the PUK had no immediate intention to march on Irbil.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani said in remarks published Monday that his group, whose weekend offensive shattered a month-long lull in fighting, would rely on the Irbil region's million residents to oust the KDP.

The London-based Arabic daily Al-Hayat reported Tuesday that a PUK-run radio station was broadcasting calls for the inhabitants of Irbil to revolt against KDP control.

The newspaper also quoted an unnamed PUK official as saying five Iraqi divisions were deployed around Irbil.

Rashid, the PUK spokesman, said he had no reports of renewed fighting Tuesday.

In a faxed statement to the AP in Cyprus, the KDP said late Tuesday that it had remobilized its forces and set up defensive lines 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Irbil. The statement said that the PUK had launched a large, but unsuccessful, offensive just 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Iranian border, in the Balisan Valley, south of Rawondoz.

Earlier, Faik Nerweyi, a KDP spokesman in Ankara, Turkey, claimed that Iran's support of the PUK was hampering the effort to repel Talabani's offensive.

"Ten rockets hit the ground along the front line every minute," he told the AP. "Where do they get these weapons?" He did not say when or where the shelling was taking place.

The latest KDP-PUK fighting, which began on Saturday, is taking place amid calls from the United States and Iraq for the two groups to settle their differences through talks.

Baghdad's plea, however, was accompanied by a warning to the advancing faction against "dealing with foreign powers," a reference to the PUK's ties to Iran.

Clashes between the two factions in August led Saddam to send his army into the northern "safe haven" protected by U.S.-led forces. The United States responded with U.S. missile strikes against Iraqi military sites and a U.S. military buildup in the Gulf region.

In Washington, meanwhile, a senior U.S. military officer said Iraq rebuilt part of its surface-to-air missile network in southern Iraq last month within two weeks of the U.S. missile attacks on the system.

The PUK retook Sulaymaniyah, the area's second largest city, at dawn Sunday. On Monday, the PUK said it had retaken six districts around Irbil.

The KDP confirmed the loss of Sulaymaniyah, saying it "evacuated the city to avoid bloodshed and fighting" and charged that the PUK forces were backed by more than 15,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards who crossed the border into Iraq.

The KDP said in its Tuesday night statement that the Revolutionary Guard Corps, headed by a general identified as Mohammed Ja'feri, had set up a joint command center with the PUK in Sulaymaniyah.

The two Kurdish groups have been at odds for years.

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^PRECEDE Baghdad<

^Kurdish Rebels Urge Irbil's Residents to Revolt<

^Eds: RECASTS and UPDATES thruout with Turkey saying it has reports of Iranian involvement in the fighting, U.S. reports that Iran has rebuilt much of its missile defense system, CHANGES byline.<

^By YALMAN OMARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) - Kurdish rebels said they halted their advance outside northern Iraq's provincial capital Tuesday, urging the population to rebel against a rival, Iraqi-backed faction that controls the city.

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But Faik Nerweyi, a KDP spokesman in Ankara, Turkey, claimed the Iran's support of the PUK was hampering the effort to repel Talabani's offensive.

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^Kurdish Rebels Urge Irbil's Residents to Revolt<

^Eds: AMs; UPDATES with Turkey saying it has reports of Iranian involvement in the fighting.<

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There has been no indication that Saddam Hussein's troops have intervened this time as the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan marched back to the city.

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^Precede BAGHDAD<

^Kurdish Rebels Urge Irbil's Residents to Revolt<

^Eds: UPDATES in grafs 3, and 22-23 with U.S. military saying that Iraq has rebuilt its missile system in the south, CHANGES dateline, byline.<

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^Associated Press Writer=

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Clashes between the two factions in August led Saddam to send his army into the northern "safe haven" protected by U.S.-led forces. The United States responded with U.S. missile strikes against Iraqi military sites and a U.S. military buildup in the Gulf region.

In Washington, the senior military officer said the Iraqis have "been able to rebuild" parts of their air-defense system in the south. "They've been slapping things together but not threatening our aircraft."

The officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the AP that the rebuilt weapons system was patched together and is less sophisticated than the network before the U.S. missile attacks.

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^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Say Iranian Troops Have Withdrawn, Little Fighting<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ZAKHU, Iraq (AP) _ Fighting between rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq has diminished and an Iraqi-backed group said Wednesday that Iranian troops who had been helping the other side have gone home.

The claim by the Kurdistan Democratic Party that Iranians were helping its opponents in the fighting over territory in northern Iraq was never confirmed.

Both the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK, and Iran deny Iranian involvement in the fighting.

But the claims had led to concern that Iran and Iraq could be drawn into a direct conflict. The two countries fought a war from 1980 to 1988 in which millions died.

The KDP, which with Iraqi backing drove the PUK from most major cities in northern Iraq in August, said Iranian troops withdrew from Iraqi territory on Tuesday.

"We're happy that they withdrew before the turmoil turned into an international crisis," KDP spokesman Faik Nerweyi told The Associated Press in Ankara, Turkey. "But we don't know how much weaponry they left behind."

A PUK spokesman said no serious fighting has taken place since Monday. "There are some skirmishes going on here and there, but that's all," PUK spokesman Shazad Saib told the AP.

But Nerweyi said fighting was still continuing Wednesday between the towns of Degala and Kuysanjag, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of the northern Iraqi provincial capital, Irbil.

The KDP said Tuesday night it had set up its defensive lines at Irbil, and the PUK forces halted their advance just outside the city.

The KDP's capture of Irbil on Aug. 31 was aided by Iraqi troops, but there had been no indication that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army has intervened as the Iranian-backed PUK marched back to the city this week.

AP-LD-10-16-96 1029GMT<

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^Eds: CORRECTS casualties in 3rd graf to 1 million dead or wounded;
CORRECTS spelling of Nerweyi in 7th graf.<

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Say Iranian Troops Have Withdrawn, Little
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^Precede ZAKHU<

^Rebels Advance Toward Irbil On Two Fronts<

^Eds: AMS. UPDATES throughout with details from front, color from northern Iraq, Saddam's remarks.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

BANAWIYEH, Iraq (AP) _ Amid the boom of artillery, rebel Kurdish guerrillas advanced toward northern Iraq's key city of Irbil on two fronts Wednesday.

The fighters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan were at their closest point to the city here, 20 miles (32 kms) northeast of Irbil, the guerrillas told a visiting reporter.

The conversation between fighters who were taking a break behind a hilltop was interrupted by the thuds of shells being fired.

"Those are our doshkas (artillery)," said Rekan Hassan, a 16-year-old PUK fighter, who looked like a clean-cut high school student _ but with a Kalashnikov rifle instead of a book bag.

The PUK started a counteroffensive last weekend against the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party, recapturing many towns it had lost in the past seven weeks. Among them was Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest Kurdish city and the traditional stronghold of the PUK.

Fighters from both sides confirmed that the PUK had captured the strategic town of Kuysanjaq on another front, on the main road between Sulaymaniyah and Irbil.

Kuysanjaq is some 25 miles (40 kms) east of Irbil, which has been under KDP control since the group seized it Aug. 31 with help from Saddam Hussein's army. Irbil is the de facto capital of the Kurdish region.

Iraq's intervention in the fighting prompted the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense installations in southern Iraq.

So far, there has been no sign that the Iraqis are involved in the latest fighting. Their tanks are believed to be dug in south of Irbil.

"We are not going to stop," said Rasul Kosrat, an aide to PUK leader Jalal Talabani. "We will go on until the end. We are going to get all of Kurdistan."

Kosrat spoke to Associated Press Television in Sulaymaniyah.

KDP officials claim their rival has been able to bounce back only because Iranian troops have intervened in the fighting, but there was no sign of Iranian troops in this area Wednesday.

All the fighters encountered looked Kurdish and spoke Kurdish. In fact, it was hard to distinguish between the two factions' guerrillas: both wear the same baggy pants and sport beards.

A KDP officer claimed the Iranians were involved _ but had recently left.

"Last night, they all started leaving, back to Iran I suppose," said Jamil Mahmoud, the head of a small group of guerrillas guarding a line of trenches on the other side of the front line. KDP spokesmen outside Iraq also said the Iranians had pulled out.

Mahmoud said that now the Iranians had left, "we will start attacking and win back everything we lost in no time."

In villages and towns newly taken over by the PUK, life looked normal.

Village children played by the side of the road. Flocks of goats on their way to grazing grounds blocked traffic. Women baked bread in mud-walled ovens in front of their thatched-roof homes.

Stores were open in Sulaymaniyah and the streets buzzed with people. The inviting calls of the shoeshine boys mixed with offers of cold fruit drinks, fresh grapes and tomatoes in the crowded bazaar. Traffic clogged the streets downtown.

In a rare comment on the situation in northern Iraq, Saddam said in Baghdad that "the northern part of the homeland was liberated from the foreigners" in August, "thus smashing what the foreigners have assembled over the years to provide a psychological and material basis for plotting."

Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh said shipments of food into northern Iraq were proceeding normally and "the movement of commodities is free."

Last month, after the KDP had taken control of virtually the entire Kurdish area of northern Iraq, the Iraqi government announced it was lifting an internal blockade that had prevented many essential supplies _ including food _ from reaching the Kurdish areas.

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^Skirmishes Reported, Otherwise Calm in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with Barzani comments, fresh details, color throughout.
DELETES outdated material.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - The big guns fell silent Thursday, six days after Iranian-backed Kurdish guerrillas began a counteroffensive to avenge their rout by a rival faction supported by Saddam Hussein's army.

Only the regional capital of Irbil now stands between the fighters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and a convincing victory over the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party.

But the PUK, unwilling to risk a daunting confrontation with Iraqi tanks deployed near the city, has slowed its advance amid calls by Iraq, neighboring Iran and the United States to mediate the latest round of fighting in the volatile region.

In ominous remarks, KDP leader Massoud Barzani threatened on Thursday to ask again for Saddam's help against the PUK.

"If we need, we'll ask Iraq to help us again," Barzani told reporters in the town of Salah ad Din about 20 miles (35 kilometers) northeast of Irbil.

"Our enemy is Iran, PUK is a puppet," he said.

By Thursday afternoon, there had been no major artillery exchanges in the area for nearly 24 hours. Irbil residents went about their business calmly. Only the sound of small gunfire could be heard in the hills outside the city.

Guerrillas on both sides of the front line some 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Irbil looked relaxed.

"We are back to the old days, everything is calm all over northern Iraq," said Poul Dahl, chief of the U.N. security troops in Irbil.

"There are only skirmishes," he told The Associated Press.

Irbil, de facto capital of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, has been held by KDP forces since Aug. 31, when they captured it from the PUK with the help of Saddam's army.

Saddam's intervention prompted U.S. retaliation with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense systems in southern Iraq.

The rival PUK was moving toward the city on Wednesday from the east and northeast, as artillery boomed in the hills.

The PUK was closest to Irbil in the village of Banawiyeh, about 20 miles (30 kilometers) northeast of the city. It also was advancing from Kuysanjaq, a town about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Irbil and on the main road from Sulaymaniyah.

But despite skirmishes, and a front line that changes day by day "All roads are open and everyone can travel anywhere," said Shazad Saib, the PUK representative in Ankara, Turkey.

A PUK statement Thursday said elite Iraqi Republican Guards were moving toward Irbil from Baghdad, to support Iraqi tanks encamped 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the city, and also to help the KDP hold on.

But there was no confirmation of any movement by Iraqi forces and Iraq's ambassador in Turkey, Rafi al-Tikriti, said on Thursday that military intervention by Iraq was out of the question for the time being.

There also had been no confirmation this week of KDP claims that Iranian troops had crossed into Iraq to aid the rival PUK. All the fighters encountered on the front line spoke Kurdish and appeared to be Kurdish.

A KDP fighter said the Iranians had pulled back Tuesday, matching a statement by the KDP representatives in London.

Kawakawani, the KDP officer, said his group had captured some Iranians during fighting this week. He gave no details.

"Last night, they all started leaving, back to Iran I suppose," said Jamil Mahmoud, the head of a small group of KDP guerrillas guarding a line of trenches on the front line.

Now that the Iranians had left, Mahmoud said, "we will start attacking and win back everything we lost in no time."

The two factions long have fought to control northern Iraq, which the United States and its allies set up as a Kurdish "safe haven" in 1991 to protect the Kurds after their failed uprising against Saddam.

In Sulaymaniyah, the area's second-largest city - recaptured on Sunday - victory celebrations Thursday looked little different than the ones at the town square after the rival group had taken over on Sept. 9.

Women held up glass-framed portraits of PUK leader Jalal Talabani, the faction leader now in charge of the city. Children waved small green flags representing his group. And men danced joyfully to Kurdish folk songs as the crowd shouted slogans of victory.

Referring to the flags of the two rival Kurdish factions, jeans salesman Marivan Abdurrahman, 26, said, "I always keep a yellow flag, a green one and a portrait of Saddam at home - just in case."

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^Skirmishes, Otherwise Calm Reported in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES, RECASTS thruout with U.N. officials saying calm returns; PUK saying all roads open<

^AP Photos BAG1,103,ANK101-2,IRB101,103<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

BANAWIYEH, Iraq (AP) _ Kurdish guerrillas seeking to recapture the key city of Irbil from a rival party have slowed their advance, unwilling to tackle Iraqi army tanks dug in on the opposite side of the northern capital, and relative calm was reported in the region Thursday.

"We are back to the old days, everything is calm all over northern Iraq," said Poul Dahl, chief of the U.N. security troops in Irbil. "There are only skirmishes," he said by telephone to The Associated Press in Ankara, Turkey.

Irbil, de facto capital of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, was captured by the Kurdistan Democratic Party on Aug. 31 with the help of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army.

Saddam's intervention prompted U.S. retaliation with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense systems in southern Iraq.

The rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which had held Irbil, was moving back toward the city on Wednesday from the east and northeast, as artillery boomed in the hills.

The PUK was closest to Irbil in this village, Banawiyeh, about 2 miles (30 kilometers) northeast of the

city. It was also was advancing from Kuysanjaq, a town about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Irbil and on the main road from Sulaymaniyah.

But despite skirmishes, and a front line that changes day by day "All roads are open and everyone can travel anywhere," said Shazad Saib, the PUK representative in Ankara.

A PUK statement Thursday said elite Iraqi Republican Guards were moving toward Irbil from Baghdad, to support Iraqi regular armored units encamped on the southwestern side of the city, and also to help the KDP hold the town.

But there was no confirmation of any Iraqi force movement, just as there had been no confirmation this week of KDP claims that Iranian troops had crossed into Iraq to aid the rival PUK.

All the fighters encountered on the front line Wednesday spoke Kurdish and appeared to be Kurdish.

A KDP fighter said the Iranians had pulled back Tuesday, matching a statement by the KDP representatives in London.

"Last night, they all started leaving, back to Iran I suppose," said Jamil Mahmoud, the head of a small group of KDP guerrillas guarding a line of trenches on the other side of the front line.

Now that the Iranians had left, Mahmoud said, "we will start attacking and win back everything we lost in no time."

Meanwhile in Sulaymaniyah, the area's second-largest city _ recaptured by the PUK last week _ Rasul Kosrat, an aide to Patriotic Union leader Jalal Talabani, told Associated Press Television: "We are not going to stop. We will go on until the end. We are going to get all of Kurdistan."

The two factions long have fought to control northern Iraq, which the United States and its allies set up as a Kurdish "safe haven" in 1991 to protect the Kurds after their failed uprising against Saddam.

The fighting this week has produced offers from the Iraqi and Iranian governments, as well as the United States to mediate the dispute.

The Iraqi radio and press has recently stopped calling Talabani traitor, and there was no indication Iraqi troops made any moves to interfere in the PUK counteroffensive, despite KDP claims that Iranian troops had entered Iraq.

Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau plans to travel to the region this weekend to meet with Talabani and KDP leader Massoud Barzani, Washington announced Wednesday.

An accord mediated by the United States and Turkey last year collapsed in mid-August, and the KDP sought help from Saddam's army to oust its rival Kurds, the PUK.

In villages and towns recaptured by the PUK, life appeared to be normal.

Village children played by the side of the road. Herds of goats blocked traffic on their way to grazing grounds. Women baked bread in mud-walled ovens in front of their thatched-roof homes.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld-Writethru<

^Precede: BANAWIYEH<

^Skirmishes, Otherwise Calm Reported in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES in 2nd graf with calm inside Irbil, color from Sulaymaniyah in new grafs 16-20, 'Meanwhile ... precautions,'

CHANGES dateline, minor edits throughout.<

^AP Photos BAG1,103,ANK101-2,IRB101,103<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Kurdish guerrillas seeking to recapture this city from a rival party have slowed their advance, unwilling to confront Iraqi army tanks waiting nearby.

There has been no major fighting in the area for nearly 24 hours and the people in Irbil were on Thursday going about their business calmly.

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A PUK statement Thursday said elite Iraqi Republican Guards were moving toward Irbil from Baghdad, to support Iraqi tanks encamped 31 miles (50 kilometers) south of the city, and also to help the KDP hold the town.

But there was no confirmation of any movement by Iraqi forces, just as there had been no confirmation this week of KDP claims that Iranian troops had crossed into Iraq to aid the rival PUK.

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The two factions long have fought to control northern Iraq, which the United States and its allies set up as a Kurdish "safe haven" in 1991 to protect the Kurds after their failed uprising against Saddam.

Meanwhile in Sulaymaniyah, the area's second-largest city _ recaptured by the PUK on Sunday _ victory celebrations Thursday looked no different than the ones at the town square after the rival group had taken over in August.

Women held up glass-framed portraits of PUK leader Jalal Talabani, the faction leader now in charge of the city. Children waved small green flags representing his group. And men danced joyfully to Kurdish folk songs as the crowd shouted slogans of victory.

"One comes, one goes. We're used to our town changing hands," said Marivan Abdurrahman, a 26-year-old salesman at a blue-jean store downtown.

Residents said that as the town changed hands twice in the past two months, there was little bloodshed. When one faction appeared to have the upper hand, the other group fled.

"I always keep a yellow flag, a green one and a portrait of Saddam (Hussein) at home _ just in case," Abdurrahman added, referring to the flags of the two rival Kurdish factions.

Saddam's troops have been barred for six years from entering the Kurdish enclave set up after the Gulf War by the United Nations, but practical Kurds take their precautions.

The fighting this week has produced offers from the Iraqi and Iranian governments, as well as the United States to mediate the dispute.

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^Skirmishes, Otherwise Calm Reported in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES thruout with calm inside Irbil, color from

Sulaymaniyah, U.N. officials saying calm returns; PUK saying all roads open, minor EDITING throughout.<

^AP Photos BAG1,103,ANK101-2,IRB101,103<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

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A PUK statement Thursday said Iraq's elite Republican Guards were moving toward Irbil from Baghdad to support Iraqi tanks encamped 30 miles (50 kilometers) south of the city, and also to help the KDP hold the town.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 4th Ld-Writethru<

^Skirmishes, Otherwise Calm Reported in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: AMs; UPDATES with fresh details, color throughout. DELETES outdated material. CORRECTS date of Sulaymaniyah's capture in 23rd graf, 'Meanwhile ...<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

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But the PUK, unwilling to risk a daunting confrontation with Iraqi tanks deployed near the city, has slowed its advance amid calls by Iraq, neighboring Iran and the United States to mediate the latest round of fighting in the volatile region.

"We are not advancing because Saddam's tanks are protecting Irbil," said a front-line PUK guerrilla who did not want to be named.

However, Mokaddar Kawakawani, a KDP officer, said the PUK was not advancing because it did not have the strength to do so.

By Thursday afternoon, there had been no major artillery exchanges in the area for nearly 24 hours. Irbil residents went about their business calmly. Only the sound of small gunfire could be heard in the hills outside the city.

Guerrillas on both sides of the front line some 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Irbil looked relaxed.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld<

^Skirmishes, Otherwise Calm Reported in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with Barzani comments in new 4-7 grafs.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

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"If we need, we'll ask Iraq to help us again," Barzani told reporters in the town of Salah ad Din about 20 miles (35 kilometers) northeast of Irbil.

"Our enemy is Iran, PUK is a puppet," he said.

He also denied reports that Iraqi tanks were heading toward Irbil, but did not reveal the source of these reports.

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Rebels Advance Toward Irbil on Two Fronts

Eds: Recaps previous.

AP Photos RAG1,103,ANK101-2,IRB101,103

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

BANAWIYEH, Iraq (AP) - Kurdish guerrillas are advancing toward the key city of Irbil, seeking to recapture it from a rival faction.

Irbil, the de facto capital of the Kurdish region, was captured by the Kurdistan Democratic Party on Aug. 31 with the help of Saddam Hussein's army, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense installations in southern Iraq.

The rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which had held the city, was moving back toward Irbil on Wednesday from the east and northeast as artillery boomed in the hills.

KDP fighters claimed the PUK was being helped by Iranian soldiers. But all the fighters encountered Wednesday spoke Kurdish and appeared to be Kurdish. A KDP fighter said the Iranians had pulled back.

"Last night, they all started leaving, back to Iran I suppose," said Jamil Mahmoud, the head of a small group of guerrillas guarding a line of trenches on the other side of the front line.

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"We are not going to stop. We will go on until the end. We are going to get all of Kurdistan," Rasul Kosrat, an aide to Patriotic Union leader Jalal Talabani, told Associated Press Television in Sulaymaniyah.

The Patriotic Union recaptured Sulaymaniyah, its traditional stronghold and the area's second-largest city, in a counteroffensive last week that forced the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party from several towns.

The two factions long have fought for control of northern Iraq, which the United States and its allies set up as a Kurdish "safe haven" in 1991 to protect the Kurds after they made a failed uprising against Saddam.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Wednesday that Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau would meet separately with the faction leaders this weekend to try to work out a cease-fire.

An accord mediated by the United States and Turkey last year collapsed in mid-August, and Irbil fell with the help of Iraq's army on Aug. 31.

So far, there has been no sign that the Iraqis are involved in the latest fighting. Their tanks are believed to be dug in south of Irbil.

KDP officials claim their rival has been able to bounce back only because of the Iranians.

The Patriotic Union and Iran both deny that Iranian fighters are involved, but the claim had raised concerns that Iran and Iraq could be drawn into a direct conflict. The two countries fought a war from 1980 to 1988 in which millions died.

In villages and towns recaptured by the PUK, life appeared to be normal.

Village children played by the side of the road. Herds of goats blocked traffic on their way to grazing grounds. Women baked bread in mud-walled ovens in front of their thatched-roof homes.

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Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh said shipments of food into northern Iraq were proceeding normally and "the movement of commodities is free."

The government lifted an internal blockade of the Kurdish area last month after the KDP had taken control of almost the entire region.

Precede BANAWIYEH, Iraq

Skirmishes, Otherwise Calm Reported in Northern Iraq

Eds: UPDATES thruout with calm inside Irbil, color from Sulaymaniyah, U.N. officials saying calm returns; PUK saying all roads open, minor EDITING throughout.

AP Photos BAG1,103,ANK101-2,IRB101,103

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There has been no major fighting in the area for nearly 24 hours and the people in Irbil went about their business calmly Thursday.

"We are back to the old days, everything is calm all over northern Iraq," said Poul Dahl, chief of the U.N. security troops in Irbil. "There are only skirmishes," he told The Associated Press.

Irbil, de facto capital of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, was captured by the Kurdistan Democratic Party on Aug. 31 with the help of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army.

Saddam's intervention prompted U.S. retaliation with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense systems in southern Iraq.

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The PUK was closest to Irbil in the village of Banawiyeh, about 20 miles (30 kilometers) northeast of the city. It also was advancing from Kuysanjab, a town about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Irbil and on the main road from Sulaymaniyah.

But despite skirmishes, and a front line that changes day by day, "All roads are open and everyone can travel anywhere," said Shazad Saib, the PUK representative in Ankara, Turkey.

A PUK statement Thursday said Iraq's elite Republican Guards were moving toward Irbil from Baghdad to support Iraqi tanks encamped 30 miles (50 kilometers) south of the city, and also to help the KDP hold the town.

But there was no confirmation of any movement by Iraqi forces, just as there had been no confirmation this week of KDP claims that Iranian troops had crossed into Iraq to aid the rival PUK.

All the fighters encountered on the front line Wednesday spoke Kurdish and appeared to be Kurdish.

A KDP fighter said the Iranians had pulled back Tuesday, matching a statement by the KDP representatives in London.

"Last night, they all started leaving, back to Iran I suppose," said Jamil Mahmoud, the head of a small group of KDP guerrillas guarding a line of trenches on the other side of the front line.

Now that the Iranians had left, Mahmoud said, "we will start attacking and win back everything we lost in no time."

The two factions long have fought to control northern Iraq, which the United States and its allies set up as a Kurdish "safe haven" in 1991 to protect the Kurds after their failed uprising against Saddam.

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"One comes, one goes. We're used to our town changing hands," said Marivan Abdurrahman, a 26-year-old salesman at a blue-jean store downtown.

Residents said that as the town changed hands twice in the past two months, there was little bloodshed. When one faction appeared to have the upper hand, the other group fled.

"I always keep a yellow flag, a green one and a portrait of Saddam (Hussein) at home - just in case," Abdurrahman added, referring to the flags of the two rival Kurdish factions.

The fighting this week has produced offers from the Iraqi and Iranian governments, as well as the United States, to mediate the dispute.

233 87 nic ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds,0646<

^Rebels Advance Toward Irbil on Two Fronts<

^Eds: Recaps previous.<

^AP Photos BAG1,103,ANK101-2,IRB101,103<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

BANAWIYEH, Iraq (AP) - Kurdish guerrillas are advancing toward the key city of Irbil, seeking to recapture it from a rival faction.

Irbil, the de facto capital of the Kurdish region, was captured by the Kurdistan Democratic Party on Aug. 31 with the help of Saddam Hussein's army, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense installations in southern Iraq.

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"We are not going to stop. We will go on until the end. We are going to get all of Kurdistan," Rasul Kosrat, an aide to Patriotic Union leader Jalal Talabani, told Associated Press Television in Sulaymaniyah.

The Patriotic Union recaptured Sulaymaniyah, its traditional stronghold and the area's second-largest city, in a counteroffensive last week that forced the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party from several towns.

The two factions long have fought for control of northern Iraq, which the United States and its allies set up as a Kurdish "safe haven" in 1991 to protect the Kurds after they made a failed uprising against Saddam.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Wednesday that Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau would meet separately with the faction leaders this weekend to try to work out a cease-fire.

An accord mediated by the United States and Turkey last year collapsed in mid-August, and Irbil fell with the help of Iraq's army on Aug. 31.

So far, there has been no sign that the Iraqis are involved in the latest fighting. Their tanks are believed to be dug in south of Irbil.

KDP officials claim their rival has been able to bounce back only because of the Iranians.

The Patriotic Union and Iran both deny that Iranian fighters are involved, but the claim had raised concerns that Iran and Iraq could be drawn into a direct conflict. The two countries fought a war from 1980 to 1988 in which millions died.

In villages and towns recaptured by the PUK, life appeared to be normal.

Village children played by the side of the road. Herds of goats blocked traffic on their way to grazing grounds. Women baked bread in mud-walled ovens in front of their thatched-roof homes.

Stores were open in Sulaymaniyah and the streets buzzed with people. The calls of shoeshine boys in the crowded bazaar mixed with offers of cold fruit drinks, fresh grapes and tomatoes. Traffic clogged the streets.

Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh said shipments of food into northern Iraq were proceeding normally and "the movement of commodities is free."

The government lifted an internal blockade of the Kurdish area last month after the KDP had taken control of almost the entire region.

AP-LD-10-17-96 0103GMT<

w0078-----

r i BC-Iraq-Kurds 1stLd 10-17 0538

233 87 nic ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld,0546<

^Rebels Advance Toward Irbil on Two Fronts<

^Eds: SUBS 15th graf to CORRECT to ``more than a million'' sted
``millions'' killed during Iran-Iraq war; pickup 16th graf, `In
villages ... '(<

^AP Photos BAG1,103,ANK101-2,IRB101,103<

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^In villages, 16th graf<

AP-LD-10-17-96 0723GMT<

r i BC-Iraq-Kurds 6thLd-Writethru 10-17 0865

intj nic nicd nat 888u ank lonnrg nynrg

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 6th Ld-Writethru<

^Skirmishes, Otherwise Calm Reported in Northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with details, color in grafs 18-20, DELETES outdated material, minor edits throughout.<

^AP Photo BAG101

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ The big guns fell silent Thursday, six days after Iranian-backed Kurdish guerrillas began a counteroffensive to avenge their rout by a rival faction supported by Saddam Hussein's army.

Only the regional capital of Irbil now stands between the fighters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and a convincing victory over the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party.

But the PUK, unwilling to risk a daunting confrontation with Iraqi tanks deployed near the city, has slowed its advance amid calls by Iraq, neighboring Iran and the United States to mediate the latest round of fighting in the volatile region.

In ominous remarks, KDP leader Massoud Barzani threatened on Thursday to ask again for Saddam's help against the PUK.

"If we need, we'll ask Iraq to help us again," Barzani told reporters in the town of Salah ad Din about 20 miles (35 kilometers) northeast of Irbil.

"Our enemy is Iran, PUK is a puppet," he said.

"We are not advancing because Saddam's tanks are protecting Irbil," said a front-line PUK guerrilla who did not want to be named.

However, Mokaddar Kawakawani, a KDP officer, said the PUK was not advancing because it did not have the strength to do so.

By Thursday afternoon, there had been no major artillery exchanges in the area for nearly 24 hours. Irbil residents went about their business calmly. Only the sound of small gunfire could be heard in the hills outside the city.

Guerrillas on both sides of the front line some 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Irbil looked relaxed.

"We are back to the old days, everything is calm all over northern Iraq," Poul Dahl, chief of the U.N. security troops in Irbil, told The Associated Press.

Irbil, de facto capital of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, has been held by KDP forces since Aug. 31, when they captured it from the PUK with the help of Saddam's army.

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A PUK statement Thursday said elite Iraqi Republican Guards were moving toward Irbil from Baghdad, to support Iraqi tanks thought to be encamped 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the city, and also to help the KDP hold on to Irbil.

But there was no independent confirmation of any movement by Iraqi forces and Iraq's ambassador in Turkey, Rafi al-Tikriti, said on Thursday that military intervention by Iraq was out of the question for the time being.

In the village of Koshtapa, 12 miles (20 kilometers) south of Irbil, Iraqi troops and KDP fighters were jointly manning a checkpoint on the road leading south to the oil city of Kirkuk, which is under the control of the Iraqi government.

No tanks were in sight and the KDP men, rather than the Iraqis, were stopping motorists for identity checks. The Iraqi soldiers wore the black berets of the Republican Guard infantry.

Villagers told the AP the Iraqi troops have been in the area since the capture of Irbil by the KDP on Aug. 31.

There also had been no confirmation this week of KDP claims that Iranian troops had crossed into Iraq to aid the rival PUK. All the fighters encountered on the front line spoke Kurdish and appeared to be Kurdish.

But a KDP fighter said the Iranians had pulled back Tuesday, matching a statement by the KDP representatives in London.

Kawakawani, the KDP officer, said his group had captured some Iranians during fighting this week. He gave no details.

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^YO-HH<

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nic intj nic nicd nat 888u ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld

^Fighting on 3 Fronts; Iraqis Stay Put; Irbil Quiet<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

^Eds: UPDATES in 2nd graf with PUK denying it held Kuysanjaq; Edits to conform.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) _ Rival Kurdish factions battled on three front around this regional capital Friday, with one side claiming it had recaptured a town lost earlier this week in the see-saw fighting.

The Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan issued a fax from its London office saying that it had held the disputed town against an attack by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, but confirming heavy fighting at Kuysanjaq, 50 kilometers (30 miles) southeast of Irbil.

After hiding in their homes for three days, waiting for the PUK rebels to counterattack and take Irbil from their Iraqi-backed KDP rivals, Kurdish residents went shopping Friday.

Meanwhile, the two factions battled to the east, southeast and northeast, close to the Iranian border.

There was no reported fighting or movement to the west and south where Iraqi troops were seen Thursday, calmly manning checkpoints in teams with the Kurdistan Democratic Party that remains in control of Irbil.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan _ driven from Irbil Aug. 31 by the KDP with help from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army _ had halted its counteroffensive about 35 kilometers (20 miles) east of the city.

The PUK captured Sulaymaniyah, the second largest Kurdish city, from the KDP on Sunday, reversing the Iraqi-backed victory of August and September.

But a KDP, pre-dawn raid Friday recaptured Kuysanjaq, a high-ranking KDP source told The Associated Press.

^He spoke, 8th graf, 2nd Ld<

AP-LD-10-18-96 1318GMT<

NCD7789-----

u i EC-Iraq-Kurds 4thLd 10-18 0158

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^EC-Iraq-Kurds, 4th Ld

^Fighting on 3 Fronts; Iraqis Stay Put; Irbil Quiet<

^Eds: RAISES reference to KDP being Iraqi-backed and to U.S. warning.<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

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The United States, meanwhile, reiterated a warning to both Iraq and Iran to keep out of the fighting in northern Iraq to avoid increasing instability in the already turbulent region.

^After hiding, 3rd graf 3rd Ld<

AP-LD-10-18-96 1411GMT<

u i BC-Iraq-Kurds 2ndLd-Writethru 10-18 1019

nic intj nic nicd nat 888u ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru

^URGENT<

^Fighting on 3 Fronts; Iraqis Stay Put; Irbil Quiet<

^AP Photo IRB05-107<

^Eds: CORRECTS mileage from Irbil in 10th graf, COMBINES urgent series, tightens.<

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He spoke on condition of anonymity, and journalists were barred for the first time from approaching the front line.

The fighting involved mostly ground troops, with some artillery, the KDP source said, adding that Kuysanjaq _ taken by the PUK on its way toward Irbil this week _ was attacked at 5 a.m. (0200 gmt) by KDP forces.

The rival Kurdish factions also battled near Diyanah, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) northeast of Irbil; and east of nearby Rawanduz.

There has been fighting in smaller villages closer to Irbil. But no gunfire could be heard in the market places Friday morning _ the first day of the Muslim weekend _ as cars, horse-drawn wagons, old men pushing carts, and pedestrians bustled about their business.

"We're coming to Irbil," PUK radio kept saying for two days, and we were all expecting them," said Wajid Shakeer, a young waiter at a downtown restaurant. "But when they did not come, people realized the threat was not so real."

Although there is no evidence that Iraqi troops, stationed as close as Koshtapa, 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Irbil, have moved to interfere with the Kurdish fighting, the PUK may have halted its advance to avoid a possible confrontation with Saddam's army.

Iraq, Iran, the United States and Turkey have all called on the Kurdish factions to stop fighting, and have offered mediation.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau plans to travel to the region this weekend to meet with the leaders of the two rival Kurdish factions.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Thursday: "We're calling upon Iraq and Iran to stay out of the fighting in northern Iraq, not to inflame it, not to engage in any provocative behavior that will just lead to further instability and further violence."

Iraqi soldiers in black berets guarded a checkpoint at the entrance to Koshtapa on Thursday night, but it was the KDP guerrillas who questioned drivers.

Saddam's tanks, which helped the KDP take Irbil on Aug. 31, could not be seen between Irbil and Koshtapa, nor from any road toward the east where the two factions were fighting Friday.

Saddam's intervention in August prompted U.S. retaliation with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense systems in southern Iraq.

The Iraqi tanks moved south from Irbil, but the soldiers remained, villagers in Koshtapa said.

"Oh, they have been shopping here all the time," said a Kurdish grocer named Mahdi, after weighing fruit and vegetables for an Iraqi officer with three stars on his shoulders.

The mixing of Iraqi troops and KDP guerrillas at checkpoints indicated a change in the situation south of Irbil, where once there was a clear border between the Baghdad-controlled southern part of Iraq and the Kurdish region in the north.

Women wailing over the bodies of three KDP fighters, believed slain at the nearby village of Chohman, were a reminder that despite lulls on many fronts, vicious fighting still raged between the Kurds.

The bodies of the three guerrillas _ or what was left of them after artillery blew them to bits _ were packed into two small grain sacks for burial in Koshtapa.

In Irbil, surface normality mixed with hidden fear.

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Tomatoes, green peppers, dark-red grapes and eggplants filled street stalls. Old men and small boys pulled two-wheeled carts of sacks of potatoes, tomatoes or large barrels of gasoline.

"I'm not afraid of (the PUK) coming here, if they do," said Mushrak Cawdat, a barber, as he shaved a customer in his salon.

"There is no difference between (the two factions). If you're not involved in their politics, there is nothing to fear."

But his customer was worried.

"They will kill people who have worked for the KDP," bus driver Salah Nebi Ahmad said through the shaving foam on his face. "KDP does the same when it takes towns. And sometimes people who are not really involved go by mistake. I hate this war."

Soon after dark on Thursday, Irbil's streets were deserted. Although there was no curfew, KDP radio urged people to stay home at night.

Only KDP fighters at checkpoints every 50 yards (meters) were seen on the streets, where stray cats walked unchallenged by traffic or pedestrians.

^ (yo/ank/lak/tm) ^

NCK1560-----

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ank intj nic nicd nat 888u

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 5th Ld

^URGENT<

^Precede IRBIL<

^Fighting on 3 Fronts; Iraqis Stay Put; Irbil Quiet<

^Eds: UPDATES with AP in disputed town, confirming Iraqi-backed forces have taken it.<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUYSANJQA, Iraq (AP) _ An Iraqi-backed Kurdish faction started a major counteroffensive Friday, capturing this strategically important town six days after losing it, and halting a rival group's push toward northern Iraq's regional capital.

Kuysanjaq, 80 kilometers (50 miles) southeast of the Irbil, is protected by mountain ranges on both sides and has traditionally been a focus of battle.

The Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party attacked the town before dawn, and moved in at noon (0900 gmt), ousting the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which receives support from neighboring Iran.

The fighting involved mostly ground troops, with some artillery, a KDP source said.

The United States reiterated a warning to both Iraq and Iran to keep out of the fighting in northern Iraq to avoid increasing instability in the already turbulent region.

Iran and Iraq have called for an end to the fighting and offered to mediate.

There were no Iraqi tanks or soldiers to be seen as the KDP made its move, battling on the east, southeast and northeast of Irbil, and keeping the PUK out of the city that was lost to the Saddam Hussein-supported faction on Aug. 31.

In addition to the fighting at Kuysanjaq _ taken by the PUK on its way toward Irbil this week _ the factions battled near Diyanah, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) northeast of Irbil; and east of nearby Rawanduz.

There was no reported fighting or movement to the west and south where Iraqi troops were seen Thursday, calmly manning village checkpoints in teams with the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which remains in control of Irbil.

The PUK had halted its offensive about 35 kilometers (20 miles) east of Irbil, after capturing Sulaymaniyah, the second largest Kurdish city, from the KDP on Sunday. It looked then as if the PUK was going to reverse the Iraqi-backed victory of August and September.

After hiding in their homes for three days, waiting for the PUK to counterattack, Kurdish residents of Irbil went shopping Friday.

^There has been, 11th graf, 2nd Ld

^(yo/lak)<

AP-LD-10-18-96 1552GMT<

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^URGENT<

^Precede IRBIL<

^Fighting on 3 Fronts; Iraqis Stay Put; Irbil Quiet<

^Eds: UPDATES confirming Iraqi-backed forces have taken disputed town.<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

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After hiding in their homes for three days, waiting for the PUK to counterattack, Kurdish residents of Irbil went shopping Friday.

There has been fighting in smaller villages close to the city, but no gunfire could be heard in the market places Friday morning - the first day of the Muslim weekend - as horse-drawn wagons, old men pushing carts, cars and pedestrians bustled about their business.

"We're coming to Irbil," PUK radio kept saying for two days, and we were all expecting them," said Wajid Shakeer, a young waiter at a downtown restaurant. "But when they did not come, people realized the threat was not so real."

The market was full of the smells of chopped meat and fresh vegetables. Vendors in front of stores offered shampoos and tooth paste from Iran, crackers and cotton swabs from Turkey, underwear and socks from Baghdad.

"I'm not afraid of (the PUK) coming here, if they do," said Mushrak Cawdat, a barber, as he shaved a customer in his salon.

"There is no difference between (the two factions). If you're not involved in their politics, there is nothing to fear."

But his customer was worried.

"They will kill people who have worked for the KDP," said Sala Nebi Ahmad, a bus driver, with shaving foam on his face. "KDP does the same when it takes towns. And sometimes people who are not really involved go by mistake. I hate this war."

The two Kurdish groups, at odds for years, differ over the PUK's close links with neighboring Iran and what policies to adopt in dealing with the Iraqi government. The KDP favors an accommodation with Baghdad over Kurdish demands for autonomy.

AP-LD-10-18-96 1604GMT<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 6th Ld-Writethru

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Strategic Town<

^Eds: AMS; UPDATES throughout with details, color from scene.

CORRECTS distance from Irbil in 2nd graf<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUYSANJQA, Iraq (AP) _ Turning the tide after six days of setbacks, an Iraqi-backed Kurdish faction Friday retook this strategic town, which straddles the highway leading to northern Iraq's regional capital.

With its capture of Kuysanjaq, the Kurdistan Democratic Party succeeded in pushing its Iranian-sponsored rivals farther away from the city of Irbil, which lies about 50 kilometers (30 miles) to the northwest.

As the two groups battled east, southeast and northeast of Irbil there was no sign that Iraqi troops had helped their KDP allies, and no Iraqi soldiers were seen moving on the roads south or east from Irbil.

The United States has warned Iraq and Iran against penetrating into Kurdish areas, and both those countries have offered mediation and called on the Kurds to stop fighting.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau planned to travel to the region this weekend to meet with the two Kurdish leaders, Washington said.

The KDP began its counteroffensive before dawn Friday and its fighters entered Kuysanjaq at about noon (0900 GMT), seizing control after expelling the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Heavy shelling and non-stop gunfire could be seen and heard from the town. One burst of KDP shelling, presumably targeting a PUK stronghold, set fire to an area a few miles (kilometers) outside town in the foothills of the Haybar Sultan mountains.

Hundreds of KDP guerrillas were massed at the entrance to Kuysanjaq, not participating in the fighting. It was not clear whether they had taken part in the battle to seize the town had been based in afterward.

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Men stood by the exit of the village, on a high point, watching the battle. Women and children preferred flat rooftops and gardens.

"We're used to the fighting, so we're not that afraid," said Pakizah Fattah, a 34-year-old mother of two. "But the kids get scared each time."

It was the third time in a month this town had changed hands. Kuysanjaq is protected by mountain ranges on both sides and has traditionally been a strategic prize in the Kurdish fighting.

In a lightning campaign that began last Sunday, the PUK retook the major city of Sulaymaniyah close to the Iranian border, then pushed westward, taking Kuysanjaq and getting to within 25 miles (40 kilometers) of Irbil.

The PUK, which is led by Jalal Talabani and has links with Iran, was expelled from Irbil, Sulaymaniyah and virtually the whole of northern Iraq by the Baghdad-backed KDP in an offensive that began Aug. 31.

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AP-LD-10-18-96 1641GMT<

08 23 87 02 nic jer ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 7th Ld-Writethru,0625<

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Strategic Town<

^Eds: UPDATES throughout with details, color from scene. CORRECTS distance from Irbil in 2nd graf<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

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AP-LD-10-18-96 1732GMT<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 7th Ld

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Strategic Town<

^Eds: UPDATES in grafs 13-14 with civilians casualties, restores dropped word ``or'' in 8th graf.<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

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There was no immediate word on military casualties from the latest fighting.

But an Associated Press photographer reported from the town of Hareer, 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of Irbil, that PUK artillery killed five civilians and wounded three others there Friday.

^In a, 13th graf 6th Ld<

^(yo-mdm-lak)<

AP-LD-10-18-96 1806GMT<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 8th Ld, 0480<

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Strategic Town<

^Eds: ADDS two new grafs 13-14 with civilians casualties. Pickup 13th graf previous, 'In a ...'<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

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^Pickup 13th graf previous, 'In a ...'

AP-LD-10-18-96 1848GMT<

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r i BC-US-Iraq-Kurds 10-18 0361

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^BC-US-Iraq-Kurds<,0367<

^US Preparing for Evacuation of More Iraqi Kurds<

^By GEORGE GEDDA=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The United States is planning to move about 70 CIA-funded Iraqi dissidents and their families from northern Iraq into Turkey this weekend, State Department officials said Friday night.

The dissidents contend they have been faced with mortal danger since Iraqi President Saddam Hussein dispatched his troops into northern Iraq in late August.

The group is affiliated with the Iraqi National Congress, which fled their headquarters in Irbil when Iraqi forces linked up with their Kurdish allies and stormed the city seven weeks ago.

The CIA helped the INC make press releases, books and radio and television broadcasts, but there is no indication of CIA involvement in INC military activities.

The State Department officials declined to provide further details but it is believed that the dissidents will remain in Turkey only briefly.

Last month, the United States evacuated to Guam via Turkey more than 2,000 Iraqi Kurds. They included Kurds who worked on U.S.-sponsored humanitarian relief programs and their families.

The Kurds are living at U.S. military facilities on Guam, a U.S. outpost in the Pacific.

All evacuees were believed to have been threatened by the change situation in northern Iraq and virtually all are expected to be resettled eventually on the U.S. mainland.

The Iraqi National Congress claims some of their members were either killed or captured by Iraqi forces at the time of the Irbil takeover.

The INC, founded after the 1991 Gulf War, has been the umbrella for Iraqi dissident groups, including the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The KDP transformed the political dynamics of northern Iraq by inviting their erstwhile enemy, Saddam, to assist them in their bitter conflict with a rival Kurdish group.

The United States also has been concerned about the safety of Iraqi Kurds who have worked for private humanitarian relief organizations. Officials said last month that they, too, may be evacuated but there has been no formal announcement.

AP-LD-10-18-96 2352GMT<

233 87 nic ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 0642<

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Strategic Town<

^Eds: Recaps previous.<

^AP Photo IRB105-107<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

KUYSANJQA, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq-backed Kurdish guerrillas have recaptured this strategic town from their Iran-sponsored Kurdish enemies, following a see-saw day of fighting with heavy shelling and non-stop gunfire.

Kuysanjaq straddles the highway leading to the north's regional capital, Irbil, the city Iraqi-allied Kurds invaded in early September _ with help from Saddam Hussein's army. The attack on the north, a U.S.-declared safe haven for the Kurds, sparked U.S. military strikes on Saddam's forces near Baghdad.

The United States has warned Iraq and Iran against entering Kurdish areas, and both those countries have offered mediation and called on the Kurds to stop fighting.

As the two groups battled Friday on three fronts _ east, southeast and northeast of Irbil _ there was no sign that Iraqi troops had helped their KDP allies, and no Iraqi soldiers were seen moving on the roads south or east from Irbil.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau planned to travel to the region this weekend to meet with leaders of the two Kurdish groups, the Clinton administration said.

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AP-LD-10-19-96 0035GMT<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru<

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Strategic Town<

^Eds: UPDATES with Iraqi newspaper attacking U.S. policy on northern Iraq in grafs 5-7, CORRECTS date of Irbil capture in 2nd graf to Aug. 31 and targets of U.S. military strikes to southern Iraq, CORRECTS reference to Friday in graf 20 to read 'the weekly Muslim day of rest,' minor edits throughout.<

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Kuysanaja straddles the highway leading to the north's regional capital, Irbil, captured on Aug. 31 by the Iraqi-allied Kurds with help from Saddam Hussein's army. Saddam's intervention in the area, declared a safe haven for Kurds in 1991, was punished by U.S. strikes on military sites in southern Iraq.

The United States has warned Iraq and Iran against entering Kurdish areas. Both countries have offered mediation and called on the Kurds to stop fighting.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Roberthe two Kurdish groups, the Clinton administration said.

But a government newspaper in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, on Saturday questioned Washington's motives. Al-Jumhuriya daily said Washington wanted to regain its foothold in the area by depriving the faction backed by Saddam _ the Kurdistan Democratic Party _ of sole control of Iraq's Kurdish areas.

Al-Jumhuriya also criticised neighboring Iran and Turkey, saying their "interference" in northern Iraq would eventually backfire. Both Iran and Turkey are fighting Kurdish insurgencies on their own territories.

"In other words, the American stance is deliberately sowing several mines in northern Iraq to explode from time to time and so the Kurdish tragedy and the separation of northern Iraq continue," it said in an editorial.

As Iraq's two rival groups battled Friday on three fronts _ east southeast and northeast of Irbil _ there was no sign that Iraqi troops had helped their KDP allies. No Iraqi soldiers were seen moving on the roads south or east from Irbil.

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^YO-HH<

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intj nat nic ncid 888

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru<

^Precede: KUYSANJAG<

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Key City, Step Up Counteroffensive<

^Eds: UPDATES throughout with advances by Iraqi-backed faction in the direction of Dokan and Sulaymaniyah, details, color, CHANGES dateline, DELETES outdated material, minor edits.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

KHANIWATMAN, Iraq (AP) - Bouncing back from a series of swift military defeats, Iraq-backed Kurdish guerrillas on Saturday threw back farther the forces of an Iranian-sponsored faction on the second day of a major counterattack.

The new gains by the Kurdistan Democratic Party followed its capture on Friday of the strategic town of Kuysanjaq after a see-saw day of fighting with heavy shelling and gunfire.

The town straddles the road leading to the north's regional capital, Irbil, captured on Aug. 31 by the KDP with help from Saddam Hussein's army.

By retaking Kuysanjaq, the KDP succeeded in reducing the threat of a PUK attack on Irbil, which lies to the northwest.

On Saturday, the KDP appeared to be launching an all-out attack, pushing back the forces of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan toward the Iranian border and inching closer to the PUK-held Sulaymaniyah, the area's second largest city.

KDP forces were on the outskirts of the village of Khaniwatman, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of Irbil or about halfway to Sulaymaniyah.

Dokan, home to an important hydroelectric dam and nestling amid steep mountains, is only 10 kilometers (six miles) ahead from Khaniwatman and a battle for the town was expected to commence later on Saturday.

Preparations for battle appeared to be well under way. Cars, buses and pick-up trucks carrying KDP fighters travelled in long convoys on the roads to Khaniwatman on their way to Dokan.

A tank, thought to be the only one the KDP has, and several armored personnel carriers were also on their way to the front Saturday morning.

On another front, the KDP reached the town of Raniyah, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the Iranian border, and PUK forces there were on the run, according to reports from the area.

Like Sulaymaniyah, Dokan and Raniyah have changed hands three times in less than two months. They had been under PUK control until the KDP, with the help of the Iraqi army, captured them in a 10-day offensive which began on Aug. 31.

The PUK regained control there in a lightening campaign which began last weekend and which the KDP alleges to have been launched with massive help from Iran.

Both Iran and the PUK deny the charge.

At Tuetmah village, by the side of the road leading to the village of Khaniwatman from Irbil, a house continued to burn for three hours after PUK fighters, who fled at dawn, set it ablaze.

Villagers said the single-story house, reduced by the fire to three wooden pillars and ashes, belonged to a KDP fighter. No one was in the house when it was torched.

The United States has warned Iraq and Iran against entering Kurdish areas and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau planned to travel to the region this weekend to meet with leaders of the two Kurdish groups.

But a government newspaper in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, on Saturday questioned Washington's motives. Al-Jumhuriya daily said Washington wanted to regain its foothold in the area by depriving the faction backed by Saddam - the Kurdistan Democratic Party - of sole control of Iraq's Kurdish areas.

Al-Jumhuriya also criticised neighboring Iran and Turkey, saying their "interference" in northern Iraq would eventually backfire. Both Iran and Turkey are fighting Kurdish rebellions on their own territories.

"In other words, the American stance is deliberately sowing several mines in northern Iraq to explode from time to time and so the Kurdish tragedy and the separation of northern Iraq continue," it said in an editorial.

As Iraq's two rival groups battled, there was no sign that Iraqi troops had helped their KDP allies. No Iraqi soldiers were seen moving on the roads south or east from Irbil.

Residents at Kuysanjaq, which has traditionally been a strategic prize in Kurdish fighting, said Friday's battle was concentrated just outside the town. They said there was no fighting inside Kuysanjaq, nor were there civilian casualties.

Men stood on high ground by the exit of the village to watch the battle. Women and children stayed back, on flat rooftops and in gardens.

"We're used to the fighting, so we're not that afraid," said Pakizah Fattah, a 34-year-old mother of two. "But the kids get scared each time."

The KDP and the PUK have been on-and-off enemies for years.

They sharply differ over control of Iraqi Kurdistan and what policy to pursue toward the Baghdad government in their search for

second day of a major counterattack.

The new gains by the Kurdistan Democratic Party followed its capture on Friday of the strategic town of Kuysanjaq after a see-saw day of fighting with heavy shelling and gunfire.

The town straddles the road leading to the north's regional capital, Irbil, captured on Aug. 31 by the KDP with help from Saddam Hussein's army.

By retaking Kuysanjaq, the KDP succeeded in reducing the threat of a PUK attack on Irbil, which lies to the northwest.

On Saturday, the KDP appeared to be launching an all-out attack, pushing back the forces of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan toward the Iranian border and inching closer to the PUK-held Sulaymaniyah, the area's second largest city.

KDP forces were on the outskirts of the village of Khaniwatman, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of Irbil or about halfway to Sulaymaniyah.

Dokan, home to an important hydroelectric dam and nestling amid steep mountains, is only 10 kilometers (six miles) ahead from Khaniwatman and a battle for the town was expected to commence later on Saturday.

Preparations for battle appeared to be well under way. Cars, buses and pick-up trucks carrying KDP fighters travelled in long convoys on the roads to Khaniwatman on their way to Dokan.

A tank, thought to be the only one the KDP has, and several armored personnel carriers were also on their way to the front Saturday morning.

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They sharply differ over control of Iraqi Kurdistan and what policy to pursue toward the Baghdad government in their search for autonomy.

They joined forces soon after the 1991 Gulf War in an ill-fated uprising against Saddam's government, but have since mostly fought each other.

^YD-HH<

AP-LD-10-19-96 1054GMT<

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^EC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld-Writethru

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Retake Key City, Step Up Counteroffensive<

^Eds: AMS. UPDATES in grafs 10-12 with PUK conceding it lost ground, reiterating charge that Iraqi troops involved. TRIMS.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

KHANIWATMAN, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi-backed Kurdish guerrillas pressed their counterattack Saturday, driving Iranian-sponsored rivals farther eastward for a second day.

Their eventual aim was to retake Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest city in mountainous northern Iraq, and re-establish their control of the entire Kurdish region.

Bouncing back from a series of swift military defeats, the Baghdad-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party added to its gains, following its capture Friday of the strategic town of Kuysanjaq.

By retaking Kuysanjaq, the KDP reduced the threat of a PUK attack on the regional capital Irbil, which lies to the northwest.

On Saturday, the KDP appeared to be pursuing an all-out attack, pushing back the forces of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan toward the Iranian border and inching closer to PUK-held Sulaymaniyah, the Kurdish region's second largest city.

KDP forces were on the outskirts of the village of Khaniwatman, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of Irbil or about halfway to Sulaymaniyah.

Dokan, home to an important hydroelectric dam and nestling amid steep mountains, is only 10 kilometers (six miles) ahead from Khaniwatman and was likely to be the next target.

Preparations for battle appeared to be well under way. Cars, buses and pickup trucks carrying KDP fighters traveled in long convoys on the roads to Khaniwatman on their way to Dokan.

A tank, thought to be the only one the KDP has, and several armored personnel carriers were also on their way to the front Saturday morning.

In a statement, the PUK conceded that its defensive line east of Kuysanjaq was overwhelmed and said fighting ranged in nearby districts.

The group reiterated its claim that Iraqi troops "dressed in Kurdish costume" were fighting alongside KDP guerrillas.

But fighters interviewed by reporters wore Kurdish costume and spoke the Kurdish language, which is quite different from the Arabic spoken by ethnically Arab Iraqis.

On another front, the KDP reached the town of Raniyah, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the Iranian border, and PUK forces there were on the run, according to reports from the area.

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The KDP and the PUK have been on-and-off enemies for years. They sharply differ over control of Iraqi Kurdistan and what policy to pursue toward the Baghdad government in their search for autonomy.

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AP-LD-10-19-96 1518GMT<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 4th Ld-Writethru

^Iraqi-Backed Kurds Push Farther East<

^Eds: UPDATES with KDP taking Khaniwatman and Raniyah, color, casualties.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

KHANIWATMAN, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi-backed Kurdish guerrillas pressed their counterattack Saturday, capturing this village and driving Iranian-sponsored rivals farther eastward for a second day.

Their eventual aim was to retake Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest city in mountainous northern Iraq, and re-establish their control of the entire Kurdish region.

After fierce battles in the surrounding hills, fighters of the Baghdad-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party captured Khaniwatman, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) southeast of Irbil _ the regional capital _ or about halfway to Sulaymaniyah.

The battle continued into the evening in the hills behind this village, but no casualty toll was announced by the KDP or its enemy, the Iranian-sponsored Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The charred bodies of three KDP guerrillas lay near the front line, with pieces of clothing and Iraqi banknotes scattered around. Another two bodies were spotted on the back of a pickup truck. Five injured KDP fighters were seen being driven to Irbil.

A truck-mounted machine gun manned by KDP guerrillas spurted bullets. Fires lit by heavy shelling burned on the mountains. A pall of smoke rose from a broiled four-wheel drive truck of the PUK.

On another front, the town of Raniyah, 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the Iranian border, was taken by the KDP after the other side abandoned it early Saturday morning, an Associated Press photographer reported. Heavy fighting was reported east of there.

Bouncing back from a series of swift military defeats, the KDP added to its gains, following its capture Friday of the strategic town of Kuysanjaq.

Dokan, home to an important hydroelectric dam and nestling amid steep mountains, is only 10 kilometers (six miles) ahead from Khaniwatman and was likely to be the next target.

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The group reiterated its claim that Iraqi troops "dressed in Kurdish costume" were fighting alongside KDP guerrillas.

But fighters interviewed by reporters wore Kurdish costume and spoke the Kurdish language, which is quite different from the Arabic spoken by ethnically Arab Iraqis.

The KDP, with the help of the Iraqi army, seized control of all of northern Iraq in a 10-day offensive that began Aug. 31.

The PUK regained control of Sulaymaniyah and pushed to within 25 miles (40 kms) of Irbil in a lightning campaign that began last weekend and which the KDP alleges was launched with massive help from Iran. Both Iran and the PUK deny the charge.

The United States has warned Iraq and Iran against entering Kurdish areas and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau planned to travel to the region this weekend to meet with leaders of the two Kurdish groups.

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The KDP and the PUK have been on-and-off enemies for years. They sharply differ over control of Iraqi Kurdistan and what policy to pursue toward the Baghdad government in their search for autonomy.

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^Evacuation Of Kurds From Northern Iraq Completed<

SILOPI, Turkey (AP) _ Another 550 Iraqi Kurds were brought to a camp in this southeastern border town on Sunday as the United States wound up its latest evacuation of U.S.-funded dissidents from northern Iraq.

On Saturday, 170 dissidents and their families crossed the border.

The Kurds were expected to be taken to the city of Diyarbakir later Sunday, where they were to fly out for eventual resettlement in the United States.

The evacuees are mostly members of the Iraqi National Congress, an umbrella organization that opposes Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The dissidents were forced to flee the congress' headquarters in Irbil when a Kurdish group allied with Saddam captured the city Aug. 31.

More than 2,000 Iraqi Kurds who worked with U.S. aid groups were evacuated by the United States through Turkey last month. They are living at U.S. military facilities on Guam, waiting to be taken to the U.S. mainland.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, or CIA, helped fund the congress by making press releases, books and radio and television broadcasts. There is no indication, however, it was involved in the group's military activities.

Turkey allowed the Kurds to be evacuated through its territory on the condition that their stay be brief. The government fears that Turkish Kurdish rebels, who stage hit-and-run attacks from bases in northern Iraq, would infiltrate into the group to reach Turkey through legal means.

AP-LD-10-20-96 0940GMT<

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^Iraq-Backed Kurds Inch Forward<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

HALEEKHAN, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi-backed Kurdish guerrillas advanced bit by bit Sunday against their Iranian-sponsored rivals, who fought back with determination.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Democratic Party moved closer to the town of Dokan, near a hydroelectric plant and the last natural barrier on the way to Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest Kurdish city with 400,000 people.

Their enemy, the guerrillas of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, seized Sulaymaniyah a week earlier and came close to the KDP-held regional capital Irbil before the KDP beat them back.

The advance by the fighters of the Baghdad-backed KDP was very slow Sunday. They sometimes retreated for a few miles (kms), then launched big strikes to reclaim lost area and a bit more.

The fiercest fighting was concentrated around the village of Haleekhan, 110 kms (70 miles) east of Irbil, which is the regional capital and largest city in the Kurdish region with 1 million people.

The PUK was making a last-ditch effort to hold Dokan. Heavy shelling struck the KDP side every few minutes.

Casualty figures were not given, but the bodies of five PUK guerrillas, killed by mortar fire and gunshots, lay in a ditch by the road.

Sunday, the battle on the Dokan front resumed at dawn after a short night's pause.

KDP guerrillas gathering behind a hill where two truck-mounted machine guns stood were caught off guard when gunfire erupted from hills on the right.

Bullets whizzed by as guerrillas ducked. Soon shells hit the ground about 20 meters (yards) away. A commander on the scene shouted, "We're retreating. Get back. Get back."

Then the KDP started shelling the other side. A few hours later, its fighters advanced. The same scenario _ pullback, advance _ repeated itself over and over.

One group of 20 women and children walked toward Khaniwatman, a village taken by the KDP on Saturday.

"Yesterday bullets rained on us, so we ran away from our village," said Amina Hamed, an old woman carrying a large sack on her back. "Today, the fighting is in the next village, so we're going back to ours."

At another front, past the town of Raniyah, 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the Iranian border, fighting had subsided by Sunday morning but KDP fighters said it would resume soon. Busloads of guerrillas headed toward the front.

Electrical power was lost in the city of Irbil on Saturday night. The Dokan plant, held by the PUK, provides electricity to the Kurdish capital and most other towns in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The PUK traditionally shuts off power to Irbil when the two side battle. It was not known why it waited so long this time.

Washington is trying to mediate between the two groups, but seem unable to bring the two sides together at the moment. Washington is most worried about Iran and Iraq getting involved in the conflict.

The two countries seem to be providing logistical support and arms to the warring parties but there is no conclusive evidence of direct involvement by their forces in the latest fighting.

Saddam Hussein's soldiers helped the KDP seize Irbil on Aug. 31, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Iraq-Backed Kurds Inch Forward<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

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The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Democratic Party moved closer to the town of Dokan, near a hydroelectric plant and the last natural barrier on the way to Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest Kurdish city.

Their enemy, the guerrillas of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, seized Sulaymaniyah a week earlier and came close to the KDP-held regional capital Irbil before the KDP beat them back in a counteroffensive.

The advance by the fighters of the Baghdad-backed KDP was very slow Sunday. They sometimes retreated for a few miles (kms), then launched big strikes to re-claim lost area and then a bit more.

The fiercest fighting was concentrated around this village 110 kms (70 miles) east of Irbil, the regional capital and largest city in the Kurdish region.

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One group of 20 women and children was spotted walking toward Khaniwatman, a village where fighting took place Saturday and that was taken by the KDP.

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^Iraq-Backed Kurds Inch Forward<

^Eds: LEADS with 10 grafs to UPDATE with faction claiming it retook dam and town, U.S. envoy arriving in Turkey on mediation effort.

PICKUP 8th graf pvs.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

HALEEKHAN, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi-backed Kurdish guerrillas claimed they captured a key hydroelectric dam and a strategic mountain town from their Iranian-sponsored rivals on Sunday.

There was no way to independently confirm the claim, made after nightfall at a time when civilian travel in the region is hazardous.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said its guerrillas took Dokan dam, the last natural barrier on the way to Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest Kurdish city, which lies 65 kms (40 miles) south.

In a statement faxed from its office in London, the group also said its fighters captured the town of Qal'at Dizah, in the mountains near the Iranian border.

KDP fighters had been seen inching toward Dokan. They sometimes retreated for a few miles (kms), then launched big strikes to re-claim lost areas and a bit more. The PUK made a last-ditch effort to hold Dokan. Heavy shelling struck the KDP side every few minutes.

Their Iran-backed enemy, the guerrillas of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, seized Sulaymaniyah a week earlier and came close to the KDP-held regional capital Irbil before the KDP beat them back.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau arrived in Turkey on Sunday for separate talks with the leaders of the two Iraqi Kurdish factions.

"We hope it will be the start for a peace agreement," the semi-official Anatolia News Agency quoted the U.S. official as saying.

Sunday's fiercest fighting was concentrated around the village of Haleekhan, 110 kms (70 miles) east of Irbil, the regional capital and largest city in the Kurdish region with a population of 1 million.

Casualty figures in the battle for Dokan were not given, but the bodies of five PUK guerrillas, killed by mortar fire and gunshots, lay in a ditch by the road.

^Sunday, the ... PICKUP 8th graf pvs.<

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^EC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld

^Iraq-Backed Kurds Claim Recapture of Key Dam<

^Eds: UPDATES with faction claiming it retook dam and town, U.S. envoy arriving in Turkey on mediation effort.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

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HALEEKHAN, Iraq (AP) _ Iraqi-backed Kurdish guerrillas claimed they captured a key hydroelectric dam and a strategic mountain town Sunday, seizing them from Iranian-sponsored rivals.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said its guerrillas took Dokan dam, the last natural barrier on the way to Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest Kurdish city, which lies 65 kms (40 miles) south.

In a statement faxed from its office in London, the group also said its fighters captured the town of Qal'at Dizah, in the mountains near the Iranian border.

There was no way independently to confirm the group's latest claims, which were made after nightfall in the region at a time when travel by civilians is hazardous.

But earlier, reporters were able to observe KDP fighters inching forward toward Dokan. They sometimes retreated for a few miles (kms), then launched big strikes to re-claim lost area and then a bit more.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau arrived in Turkey Sunday where he was expected to hold separate talks with the leaders of the two Iraqi Kurdish factions.

Pelletreau told reporters at Ankara airport that he hoped to bring about a cease-fire between the sides.

"We hope it will be the start for a peace agreement," the semi-official Anatolia News Agency quoted the U.S. official as saying.

The fiercest fighting Sunday was concentrated around the village of Haleekhan 110 kms (70 miles) east of Irbil, the regional capital and largest city in the Kurdish region.

The PUK earlier made a last-ditch effort to hold Dokan. Heavy shelling struck the KDP side every few minutes.

^Casualty figures, 7th graf<

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^BC-US-Iraq-Kurds,0191<

^CIA-Backed Kurds Sent To Turkey<

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The United States has completed the evacuation into Turkey of Iraqi Kurds who carried out dissident activities with CIA funding, the State Department said Sunday.

Spokeswoman Julie Reside said between 600 and 650 Iraqi Kurds and family members crossed the border into Turkey this weekend.

They were sent to Silopi in southeast Turkey and will be evacuated over the next few days to Guam, a U.S. territory in the Pacific. Those eligible for political refugee status will be permitted to resettle on the U.S. mainland.

The Kurds had felt threatened by the reassertion of Iraqi influence in Kurdish areas of the country seven weeks ago.

The CIA helped the Kurds with news releases, books and radio and television broadcasts, but there is no indication they received military aid from the agency.

Last month, Iraqi Kurds affiliated with U.S. humanitarian programs in Kurdish areas were flown to Guam because of concern for their safety inside Iraq. With family members included, the evacuees totaled more than 2,000.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraq-Backed Kurds Pushed Away from Dam, Irbil Loses Power<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

HALEEKHAN, Iraq (AP) — Iranian-sponsored Kurdish guerrillas retained control of a key hydroelectric dam Monday, and showed their power by cutting back electricity to the regional capital of Irbil, where rival Iraqi-backed guerrillas are in control.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) has been putting all its effort into defending Dokan Dam, the last physical barrier on the way to Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest Kurdish city, which lies 65 kilometers (40 miles) south.

The Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party said it had entered the town of Dokan briefly Sunday night and taken the dam.

But before dawn Monday, the PUK was in full control of the town again, and had shut off power to Irbil, captured Aug. 31 by the KDP with help from Iraqi tanks and troops.

On Monday, many stores and restaurants in Irbil relied on gasoline-run generators, and numerous others were closed.

The power outage also interrupted running water in some neighborhoods, where there were no generators to run the central pumps.

In poor sections of town, women and children lined up in front of street fountains to fill buckets with water.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau arrived in Turkey Sunday to hold separate talks with the leaders of the two Iraqi Kurdish factions. He told reporters at Ankara airport that he hoped to bring about a cease-fire.

Pelletreau flew Monday to Silopi, a Turkish town that borders Iraq, for talks with KDP leader Massoud Barzani, according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. He was expected to meet PUK leader Jalal Talabani in Ankara on Tuesday.

Some of the fiercest fighting has been concentrated around the village of Haleekhan 110 kilometers (70 miles) east of Irbil, where the front-line changes almost every half-hour.

One side starts an intense shelling barrage to cover its advance; the opponents become frightened and move back a mile or so. Then they halt their retreat and begin their own shelling, causing their rivals to back off.

Casualty figures have not been given.

Although it is apparent from the weaponry involved that Iran and Iraq are providing logistical support and arms to the warring parties, there is no conclusive evidence of direct involvement by their forces in the latest fighting.

Reporters on the front-line every day have seen no Iraqis or Iranians.

Saddam Hussein's soldiers helped the KDP seize Irbil on Aug. 31, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites on Sept. 3 and 4.

The PUK and the KDP have been bitter rivals for years.

Both are seeking autonomy for Iraqi Kurdish areas but they are at sharp odds over what policy to adopt toward the central government in Baghdad to achieve their objective.

They briefly joined forces in an ill-fated uprising against Iraq shortly after the 1991 Gulf War, but they have mostly fought each other since.

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^BC-Turkey-US-Iraqi Kurds<

^U.S. Envoy Meets With Rival Iraqi Kurdish Leader<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A U.S. envoy seeking to halt fighting in northern Iraq met Monday with the leader of one of the feuding Kurdish factions.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau opened talks with Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in the southeastern town of Silopi near the Iraqi border, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Sermet Atacanli said.

Pelletreau is scheduled to meet with Barzani's rival, Jalal Talabani, of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in Ankara on Tuesday.

Barzani's group allied with the forces of Saddam Hussein against the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites in early September.

Talabani's forces were pushed into Iran, but they launched an offensive this month and retook some of the ground lost. Its fighters seized Sulaymaniyah a week ago and were headed for Irbil before Barzani's fighter beat them back.

Washington is trying to mediate to avoid full-blown conflict that could draw in Iran and Iraq, which fought a 1980-88 war.

It was Pelletreau's second meeting with Barzani in Turkey.

Last month in Ankara, Barzani assured the U.S. undersecretary that his alliance with Saddam was temporary.

Pelletreau is also scheduled to meet leaders of some 250,000 Turkomans of Turkish origin living in northern Iraq, Atacanli said.

Turkey wants the Turkomans to receive the same kind of protection that is extended to the Kurds.

A U.S.-led allied force maintains security for Kurds living north of the 36th parallel since the end of the Gulf War. The mission operates from an air base in southern Turkey.

(sf/bm)

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^Iraq-Backed Kurds Pushed Away from Dam, Refugees Stream To Iran<

^Eds: UPDATES with U.S. envoy saying KDP ready for cease-fire.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — Iranian-sponsored guerrillas retained control of a key hydroelectric dam Monday, while thousands of fearful civilians fled to nearby Iran to escape fighting between Kurdish factions.

A U.S. envoy meanwhile met in Turkey with the leader of the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party, whose fighters have been trying to capture the Dokan dam.

The envoy, Robert Pelletreau, said KDP leader Massoud Barzani "appears willing to have a cease-fire" and that U.S. talks with the two sides would continue, Turkey's Anatolia news agency reported.

Pelletreau, an assistant secretary of state, was scheduled to meet Tuesday with Barzani's rival, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader Jalal Talabani.

The Iranian-supported PUK has been putting all its effort into defending Dokan dam, the last physical barrier on the way to Sulaymaniyah, the second-largest Kurdish city, which lies 65 kilometers (40 miles) south.

The KDP claimed it had entered the town of Dokan briefly Sunday night and taken the dam.

But before dawn Monday, the PUK was in full control of the town, and had shut off power to Irbil, captured Aug. 31 by the KDP with help from Iraqi tanks and troops.

On Monday, many stores and restaurants in Irbil relied on gasoline-run generators, and numerous others were closed.

The power outage also interrupted running water in some neighborhoods, where there were no generators to run the central pumps.

In poor sections of town, women and children lined up with buckets in front of street fountains to get water.

Some 7,000 Kurdish civilians, fearful of further fighting, fled across the border into Iran on Sunday night, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported. The Iranian agency said the refugees were housed in two camps near the border.

Last month, tens of thousands of Kurds fled into Iran during the KDP's previous push eastwards. Most of them returned when the fighting died down after the KDP established its hold on virtually the entire Kurdish region.

Washington is trying to mediate to avoid full-blown conflict that could draw in Iran and Iraq, which fought a 1980-88 war.

Although it is apparent from the weaponry involved that Iran and Iraq are providing logistical support and arms to the warring parties, there is no conclusive evidence of direct involvement by their forces in the latest fighting.

Reporters on the front line every day have seen no Iraqis or Iranians.

Saddam Hussein's soldiers helped the KDP seize Irbil on Aug. 31, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites on Sept. 3 and 4.

The PUK and the KDP have been bitter rivals for years.

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^U.S. Envoy Meets With Rival Iraqi Kurdish Leader<

^EDs: AMS. RECASTS, UPDATES with talks over, Pelletreau quotes, U.S. reportedly trying to revive 1995 peace accord; ADDS byline<

^AP Photos ANK 101<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A U.S. envoy seeking to halt fighting in northern Iraq said one of the rival Iraqi Kurdish groups appeared ready for a cease-fire after holding talks with its leader on Monday.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau met with Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in the southeastern town of Silopi near the Iraqi border.

"Barzani appears willing to have a cease-fire," the Anatolia news agency quoted Pelletreau as saying. "Barzani wants a good future for his country. Talks with the two sides will continue."

Barzani confirmed that the further talks would take place. "The talks have been positive," he added, according to Anatolia.

Pelletreau is was scheduled to meet with Barzani's rival, Jalal Talabani, of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in Ankara on Tuesday.

Barzani's group allied with the forces of Saddam Hussein against the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites in early September.

But Barzani reassured Pelletreau during their first meeting in Ankara last month that his alliance with Saddam was temporary.

Talabani's forces were pushed into Iran, but they launched an offensive this month and retook some of the ground lost.

"We discussed ways of preventing armed intervention by Tehran and Baghdad," Pelletreau was quoted as saying.

Iraqi Kurds had established a de-facto state in northern Iraq under the protection of a U.S.-led allied air force since the end of Gulf War. But their internal conflicts over sharing of power led to its collapse.

According to a Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, the United States ultimately wants to revive a peace accord it brokered between the two sides back in August 1995.

Pelletreau was also scheduled to meet leaders of some 250,000 Turkomans of Turkish origin living in northern Iraq, a Turkish foreign ministry spokesman, Sermet Atacanli, said Monday.

Turkey wants the Turkomans to receive the same kind of protection that is extended to the Kurds and to be part of the local administration.

(sf-za)

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^Iranian-backed Kurdish Leader Ready For Cease-fire<

^EDs: AMs. RECASTS; UPDATES with Talabani saying ready for peace,
meeting with U.S. envoy; Ciller meeting with Velayati<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A leader of Iranian-backed Iraqi Kurds said here Tuesday he was ready to halt fighting with a rival faction in northern Iraq.

Jalal Talabani, apparently indicating he hoped to work peaceably with rival Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani, declared: "We shall struggle for a pluralistic democracy in Iraq where all Iraqis can enjoy their democratic rights."

Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said his group wanted a cease-fire. However, previous cease-fires have collapsed.

The PUK leader made his remarks after a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller.

Then Talabani went into a meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau. It was Talabani's first encounter with the U.S. envoy since the fighting flared in northern Iraq in August.

Talabani's and Barzani's forces have been battling it out in northern Iraq for two months.

Iraqi Kurds had established a de-facto state in northern Iraq under the protection of a U.S.-led allied air force since the end of Gulf War. But their internal conflicts over sharing of power led to its collapse.

Before seeing Talabani Mrs. Ciller met with her Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati, who was in Istanbul for an economy conference.

"Iran assured us that they will not deploy troops and enter into Iraq," Mrs. Ciller said.

A day earlier Pelletreau met with Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in a Turkish town near the Iraqi border.

Pelletreau appeared satisfied with his talks with Barzani and said their contacts would continue.

Barzani angered Washington when he allied with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein against Talabani, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites in early September.

Barzani told Pelletreau during their first meeting in Ankara last month that his alliance with Saddam was temporary.

Iraq on Tuesday denounced Washington's involvement in the peace mission.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told the official Iraq News Agency that any foreign intervention, "whether it was Iranian or American," should be prevented.

Aziz called on Barzani and Talabani to start a dialogue in Baghdad.

Talabani's forces were pushed into Iran, but they launched an offensive this month and retook some of the ground lost.

"Our discussions involved ... the desirability of preventing armed intervention from either Tehran or Baghdad," Pelletreau said Monday.

(za-fd)

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^Iranian-backed Kurdish Leader Ready For Cease-fire<

^EDs: AMS. UPDATES with Ciller saying oil-for-food deal would resume after a cease-fire, Velayati quotes; other Iranian comments on Turkish Kurdish war; U.N. reporting no fighting, ADDS byline<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The leader of Iranian-backed Iraqi Kurds met here with a U.S. envoy on Tuesday and asserted that his side was ready to halt fighting immediately with a rival faction in northern Iraq.

"We are prepared for a cease-fire," Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said after a meeting here with Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau. "We could stop fire tomorrow."

Pelletreau told reporters there was an urgent need for a cease-fire and for talks to reconcile both sides.

Previous cease-fires and peace talks between the warring sides have collapsed.

But Talabani, apparently indicating he hoped to work peaceably with rival Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani, declared: "We shall struggle for a pluralistic democracy in Iraq where all Iraqis can enjoy their democratic rights."

Iraqi Kurds had established a de-facto state in northern Iraq under the protection of a U.S.-led allied air force since the end of Gulf War. But feuding over power-sharing has led to the state's collapse.

Mrs. Ciller, who also met with Talabani, said a oil-for-food plan to allow Iraq resume oil sales to buy humanitarian aid would begin as soon as a cease-fire agreement took effect and peace was restored.

The U.N. plan to allow up to 2 billion of oil was on the verge of going into effect when Saddam Hussein sent in troops into northern Iraq to help Barzani's faction and delayed its implementation.

Talabani's and Barzani's forces have been battling it out in northern Iraq for two months.

Barzani angered Washington when he allied with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein against Talabani, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites in early September.

Meanwhile, U.N. officials based in the main Iraqi Kurdish city of Erbil said there had been no fighting in the troubled region on Tuesday.

Before seeing Talabani Mrs. Ciller met with her Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati, who was in Istanbul.

"Iran assured us that they will not deploy troops and enter into Iraq," Mrs. Ciller said.

"We have no intention of protecting one group and throwing out the other group," the Turkish news agency Anatolia quoted Velayati as saying. "Both Barzani and Talabani should learn to live together and we are prepared to mediate between the two groups."

Barzani told Pelletreau during their first meeting in Ankara last month that his alliance with Saddam was temporary.

On Monday Pelletreau again met with Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

Iraq on Tuesday denounced Washington's involvement in the peace mission.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told the official Iraq News Agency that any foreign intervention, "whether it was Iranian or American," should be prevented.

Aziz called on Barzani and Talabani to start a dialogue in Baghdad.

Talabani's forces were pushed into Iran, but they launched an offensive this month and retook some of the ground lost.

Other fighting involving Kurds is the 12-year-old war pitting Turkish Kurdish separatist guerrillas against Turkish troops in Turkey's southeast. That war sometimes spills into neighboring Iran and Iraq.

Iran's ambassador to Turkey on Tuesday said it had allowed Turkey to use its territory for offensives against the guerrillas but didn't elaborate.

Velayati said Turkey and Iran had reached agreement to crack down on each others' opposition groups across their border.

Turkish Kurdish rebels stage hit-and-run attacks on Turkish targets from bases in Iran and Iraq.

(za-sf-fd)

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^Iraqi Kurdish Leader in Ankara To Meet U.S. Envoy<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A leader of Iranian-backed Iraqi Kurds arrived here Tuesday to meet with a U.S. envoy who has been trying to convince warring factions in northern Iraq to lay down their arms.

Jalal Talabani, of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, will have his first encounter with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau since the fighting flared in northern Iraq in August.

The meeting comes a day after Pelletreau met with Talabani's rival, Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in a Turkish town near the Iraqi border.

Pelletreau appeared satisfied with his talks with Barzani and said the contacts with him would continue.

Barzani angered Washington when he allied with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein against Talabani, prompting the United States to retaliate with cruise missile attacks on Iraqi air-defense sites in early September.

Barzani told Pelletreau during their first meeting in Ankara last month that his alliance with Saddam was temporary.

Talabani's forces were pushed into Iran, but they launched an offensive this month and retook some of the ground lost.

"Our discussions involved ... the desirability of preventing armed intervention from either Tehran or Baghdad," Pelletreau said Monday.

Iraq on Tuesday reacted with anger against Washington's involvement in a peace mission.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told the official Iraq News Agency that any foreign intervention, "whether it was Iranian or American," should be prevented.

"America shoulders the main responsibility of fighting, ruin, and destruction in the self rule areas (Iraqi Kurdistan) because it only cares about its selfish interests, and exploits the unusual situation in the north to harm Iraq and all its people," Aziz said.

Aziz called on Barzani and Talabani to start a dialogue in Baghdad.

Iraqi Kurds had established a de-facto state in northern Iraq under the protection of a U.S.-led allied air force since the end of Gulf War. But their internal conflicts over sharing of power led to its collapse.

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 ^Guns and Violence Become a Way of Life For Iraqi Kurds<
 ^With AP Photos<
 ^By YALMAN ONARAN=
 ^Associated Press Writer=

AQRA, Iraq _ As night falls, streets of this small Kurdish town are crowded with men carrying machine guns. The restaurant owner, the mechanic and the barber also flaunt a semi-automatic in their shops in a very visible spot.

This is the Wild West of the Middle East _ except a Kalashnikoff is strapped to every shoulder instead of a revolver around the waist. In Iraqi Kurdistan, weapons and violence have become a way of life.

As the world watches curiously two Kurdish factions fighting a fierce battle over control of Kurdistan, people here do not wonder why: there is nothing else to do.

After an unsuccessful uprising against Saddam Hussein in 1990, the Kurds broke off their ties with the Baghdad government and formed a de-facto state in an enclave protected by a U.S.-led allied force.

But nevertheless, they were not exempted from the sanctions imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War. So the double-edged sword of sanctions _ from the world and from Baghdad _ has left Kurdistan without a meaningful economy, with few resources and no jobs.

Fighting for one of the 11 guerrilla groups functioning in the region has become the most legitimate job. The 11 groups are in fact political parties. The two strongest factions are the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, which governed Kurdistan jointly for a while until their differences led to armed conflict. The KDP and PUK have some 70,000 peshmergas, as guerrillas are called here, at normal times. During times of war, that number is estimated to go up to 120,000 _ in a population of 3.5 million.

The other political parties also have their own guerrilla forces. The Turkmen front, representing a Turkic minority, has its akinci, or raider in Turkish. The Islamic groups have their own mujaheddin, which in Arabic means fighter for the cause of Allah. Violence has become the method to solve political differences here.

"This is the best job _ well, the only one actually _ that I could find," said Hushiyar Fars, a 23-year-old KDP peshmerga. He gets paid 1,000 dinars (dlrs 35) a month.

Tahir Tahib Ahmad, a professor of English at the University of Salahudin in Irbil, moonlights selling office supplies in his small downtown store to supplement his meek salary of 500 dinars (dlrs 17).

"Almost all the peshmergas come from the rural areas where there is nothing else to do," Ahmad said. "They have no education, yet they get paid twice as much as most of my colleagues."

Fars summarized the typical life of a peshmerga:

"Of every month, I spend ten days on the front fighting and 20 days here in the city _ doing nothing."

On any given day, one encounters hundreds of peshmergas in any town or city just hanging out. But the sight of people with guns is not only because of them. A parking lot attendant, a hotel receptionist or a mechanic typically boasts a kalashnikof strapped to his shoulder as well.

The de-facto state never becoming a real state has caused a power vacuum in which lawlessness flourishes. Gunned men can come and ask for money in the middle of the day in Irbil, the Kurdish capital. So the people have turned to guns as a way to protect themselves.

"Every man in the village has a gun," said Newzat Murtha, a 27-year-old villager in Mourtika, 15 kilometers (10 miles) south of Irbil. "I've had one since the uprising to guard myself. All my brothers and my father have their own rifles too."

A Chinese-made Kalashnikoff _ although the famous rifle is originally Russian _ can be bought for 500 to 2,000 dinars (dlrs 17 to 67) in the black market. Only a month ago, gun bazaars where vendors shouted off lucrative prices for guns, hand grenades and rocket launchers were commonplace in every town.

But worried about the transfer of arms to its rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party in charge of most of Kurdistan banned such markets. Guns can still be purchased easily but the open-air markets are closed _ for now.

The Party launched an offensive against its rival in August, capturing Irbil with the help of Saddam Hussein's tanks and the rest of Kurdistan a week later. The rival's comeback two weeks ago, with Iranian backing, has rekindled the vicious war.

Ahmad Kirkuklu, a mechanic in downtown Irbil, is among the minority who doesn't have a gun because he lives in the big city. But recently he has regretted it. Last week, an armed man hiding his face with a bandanna, came to his shop and robbed him of his day's earnings.

"Now we're all closing shop around noon scared that it might happen again, but I think I should get a Kalashnikof instead," Kirkuklu said.

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Kurdish Evacuees Leave Turkey For United States

ADANA, Turkey, (AP) - Some 600 Kurdish dissidents and their families left for the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam Tuesday to be resettled in the United States.

The Kurds, most of them members of the CIA-aided Iraqi National Congress which opposes Saddam Hussein, were evacuated into Turkey from northern Iraq earlier this week.

They were feared to be in danger after Saddam regained influence in the Kurdish-controlled north of the country seven weeks ago.

The evacuees were put on two planes on a U.S.-led airbase near this southern city. The planes took off after the evacuees went through medical and identification checks, the Turkish news agency Anatolia reported. It was not immediately known when they would arrive in Guam.

Those eligible for political refugee status will be allowed to resettle on the U.S. mainland.

The CIA helped the Iraqi National Congress with news releases, books and radio and television broadcasts, but there is no indication it gave them military aid.

Last month, another group of about 2,000 Iraqi Kurds who had been affiliated with U.S. aid groups in Kurdish areas were flown to Guam.

(sf)

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Iraq Offers Cheaper Food, Checks Dinar Slide

AP Photo BAG101

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - The government on Tuesday flooded the capital's two main food markets with foodstuffs in a bid to arrest sharp rise in prices resulting from the depreciation of the dinar, Iraq's national currency.

Baghdad residents said government trucks loaded with basic food items, including rice, sugar and cooking oil, appeared early Tuesday at the capital's Jamila and Shorja markets.

State employees, they said, were selling the goods at up to 200 dinars a kilo (90 dinars a pound) lower than merchants.

The government move forced merchants to lower their prices, though only marginally, and held the value of the dinar steady at 1,800 to the dollar, the same as Monday's exchange rate.

The move is the latest in a series of unorthodox policies pursued by Saddam Hussein's government to cushion the devastating effects of more than six years of crippling U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq for invading Kuwait in August 1990.

They have all had limited success in easing the plight of most of Iraq's 20 million people. Tuesday's move was no exception.

"I can find whatever I need in the market," said 46-year-old carpenter Hammed Shakir. "But the problem is that the prices are too high for me."

A kilo of sugar bought off the government trucks on Tuesday cost 900 dinars (50 U.S. cents) and a kilo of rice was available at 700 dinars.

The U.N. sanctions on Iraq include a ban on oil exports, once the lifeline of a relatively wealthy Iraq, and a freeze on the country's overseas assets. Iraq is allowed to import food and medicine but says that, after years of sanctions, it has spent most of its locally-held foreign currency.

Earlier this month, the government took the unusual step of ordering the country's two state-owned banks to sell dollars locally to stop the dinar's slide. The effect of the move proved short-lived and the dollar resumed its climb against the dinar.

Even at cheaper prices than those offered by merchants, the foodstuffs sold by the government on Tuesday remained well beyond the reach of most people in Iraq, where the monthly salary of a government employee is 4,000 dinars (dls 2.20).

The government operates a food ration system that is believed to be managed competently, but what it offers does not meet minimum nutritional needs. This, in turn, leaves ordinary Iraqis no choice but to try to supplement their diet by buying on the market at prices determined by profiteers and black marketeers.

The dinar traded at about 1,400 to the dollar last month. But fading hopes that a reprieve from sanctions will materialize anytime soon have since fueled the currency's downward spiral.

The much heralded reprieve is an oil-for-food deal reached last May between Iraq and the U.N. Security Council, which would allow Baghdad to sell dls 2 billion worth of oil to buy desperately needed humanitarian supplies over a 6-month period.

The deal has been delayed several times and is now not expected to go ahead before late this year or early in 1997.

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^Warring Kurds Accept Cease-Fire In Principle<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The two warring Kurdish factions of northern Iraq have agreed to the principle of a cease-fire and will hold more talks in Ankara next week, a U.S. envoy said Wednesday.

"Each side has accepted the principle of a cease-fire provided that the other side does as well and provided that supporting fire from the forces of Tehran and Baghdad also ceases," Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state, said in a departure statement after concluding talks here with two rival Iraqi Kurdish leaders.

However, it still was not clear when a cease-fire would go into effect.

"The governments of Turkey, the United States and the United Kingdom now call on both sides to implement this cease-fire in place beginning immediately," Pelletreau said. "This means that each side will take defensive positions and not initiate firing or hostilities."

Pelletreau added that the goal was to make a cease-fire permanent.

He said further talks with the Iraqi Kurdish rival groups would take place in Ankara next week.

Massoud Barzani, the leader of Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party, and his rival Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, met separately with Pelletreau.

The latest turmoil in northern Iraq erupted when Barzani, aided by Baghdad's troops, took over northern Iraq in a move which triggered U.S. military strikes on Iraqi missile targets in early September.

Talabani retaliated two weeks ago and retook some of his lost towns.

Iraqi Kurds had the chance to maintain a de-facto state in the north of the country under the protection of a U.S.-led allied airforce since the end of the Gulf War. But a power struggle between Barzani and Talabani failed to make it stable.

Washington withdrew its mission which worked as part of the allied air force from northern Iraq last month because of security risks after Baghdad's intervention.

Americans have not decided if the mission will return to northern Iraq.

"We need to defer that until talks continue sometime next week," U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense John White told reporters here on Wednesday.

White is here to discuss bilateral defense issues with Turkish officials.

White ruled out speculations in the Turkish media that U.S. troops would be moved into northern Iraq to maintain peace in the region.

"We have no intention of basing U.S. forces in northern Iraq. We have not even contemplated such an eventuality," White said.

The deputy secretary said flights by the U.S.-led air force to patrol northern Iraq resumed recently after a brief interval. He did not elaborate, but the interruption reportedly follows the Turkish government's objection to flights with bomb-loaded fighter jets.

"We have come to an understanding with the Turkish government in terms of continuing to successfully operate Provide Comfort," he said.

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^Warring Kurds Accept Cease-Fire In Principle<

^Eds: INSERTS with fighting continuing in region, Iraqi criticism of U.S. mediation<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The two warring Kurdish factions of northern Iraq have agreed in principle to a cease-fire and will hold more talks in Ankara next week, a U.S. envoy said Wednesday.

"Each side has accepted the principle of a cease-fire provided that the other side does as well and provided that supporting fire from the forces of Tehran and Baghdad also ceases," Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state said in his departure statement after concluding talks here with two rival Iraqi Kurdish leaders.

However, it still was not clear when the cease-fire would go into effect and fighting was reported continuing despite promises to halt.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party claimed Wednesday it was forced to retreat after its positions were attacked overnight by its Iranian-backed rivals, hours after the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader Jalal Talabani declared himself ready for a cease-fire.

"Thousands of Iranian soldiers conducted quite a heavy assault on us last night," KDP spokesman Fahik Nerwayi said. "If they want a genuine cease-fire, they have to keep the Iranians out."

The Turkish news agency Anatolia reported Wednesday that Talabani's forces took back control of the key hydroelectric dam, Dokan. The dam, which is a strategic target for both Kurdish groups, lies 65 kilometers (40 miles) south of the second-largest Kurdish city Sulaymaniyah.

No PUK official was immediately available for comment.

"The governments of Turkey, the United States and the United Kingdom now call on both sides to implement this cease-fire in place beginning immediately," Pelletreau said. "This means that each side will take defensive positions and not initiate firing or hostilities."

Pelletreau added that the ultimate goal was to maintain the cease-fire and strive to make it permanent.

He said further talks with the Iraqi Kurdish rival groups would take place in Ankara next week.

Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani, and his rival Talabani, met separately with Pelletreau in Ankara on Monday and Tuesday.

The mediation efforts came under fire from Baghdad.

The Iraqi official newspaper al-Jumhuriya accused the U.S. of not being serious in finding a solution to the Kurdish fighting in the north.

"America doesn't want northern Iraq to be an oasis of security, stability and prosperity, as it used to be during the self rule days under Baghdad's government," it said.

The latest turmoil, 8th graf pvs<

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^Warring Kurds Accept Cease-Fire In Principle<

^Eds: UPDATES with PUK says they will not attack anymore, RECASTS throughout, minor editing<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Skirmishes continued Wednesday in northern Iraq as a U.S. initiative brought two warring Kurdish factions close to a cease-fire.

A U.S. envoy concluding talks in Turkey with leaders of rival groups said they have agreed in principle to a cease-fire but more talks will be held in Ankara next week.

Despite their declared intention to stop fighting, skirmishes were reported in the areas of Raniyah, Kuysanjaq and around Dokan Dam Wednesday.

"We suffered casualties in the latest fighting, but we are holding Raniyah and Kuysanjaq right now," Shazad Saib, a spokesman for the Iranian-allied Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, said in Ankara.

An Associated Press photographer confirmed the capture of Kuysanjaq by the PUK and said fighters of the Iraqi-backed rival group, Kurdistan Democratic Party were fleeing the area Wednesday.

The Turkish news agency Anatolia reported that Talabani's forces took back control of the key hydroelectric dam, Dokan. The dam, which is a strategic target for both Kurdish groups, lies 65 kilometers (40 miles) south of the second-largest Kurdish city Sulaymaniyah.

The rival group attributed the latest Patriotic Union gains to the backing of Iranian troops.

"Thousands of Iranian soldiers conducted quite a heavy assault on us last night," KDP spokesman Fahik Nerwayi said. "If they want a genuine cease-fire, they have to keep the Iranians out."

Saib said: "We want a cease-fire and we will issue an order to our forces to keep their defensive positions and stop attacking as of this evening."

The American official, Robert Pelletreau, assistant secretary of state, said before his departure "each side has accepted the principle of a cease-fire provided that the other side does as well and provided that supporting fire from the forces of Tehran and Baghdad also ceases."

However, it still was not clear when the cease-fire would go into effect.

"The governments of Turkey, the United States and the United Kingdom now call on both sides to implement this cease-fire in place beginning immediately," Pelletreau said. "This means that each side will take defensive positions and not initiate firing or hostilities."

Pelletreau added that the ultimate goal was to maintain the cease fire and strive to make it permanent.

Pelletreau met with PUK leader Jalal Talabani in Ankara on Tuesday, a day after meeting with KDP leader Massoud Barzani in a Turkish town, bordering Iraq.

The U.S. initiative came under fire from Baghdad.

The Iraqi official newspaper al-Jumhuriya accused the U.S. of not being serious in finding a solution to the Kurdish fighting in the north.

"America doesn't want northern Iraq to be an oasis of security, stability and prosperity, as it used to be during the self rule days under Baghdad's government," it said.

The latest turmoil in northern Iraq erupted when Barzani, aided by Baghdad's troops, took over northern Iraq in a move which triggered U.S. military strikes on Iraqi missile targets in early September.

Talabani retaliated two weeks ago and retook some of his lost towns.

A power struggle between Talabani and Barzani led to the downfall of a de-facto Kurdish state in the north of Iraq, which was established under the protection of a U.S.-led allied air force at the end of the Gulf War.

The security risks after Baghdad's intervention, prompted Washington to withdraw a coordination center for the allied mission from northern Iraq.

Americans have not decided if the mission will return to northern Iraq from its present base in southeastern Turkey.

"We need to defer that until talks continue sometime next week," U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense John White told reporters here on Wednesday.

White was here to discuss bilateral defense issues with Turkish officials.

Speculations in the Turkish media that U.S. troops would be moved into northern Iraq to maintain peace in the region were ruled out by White.

"We have no intention of basing U.S. forces in northern Iraq. We have not even contemplated such an eventuality," he said.

The deputy secretary said flights by the U.S.-led air force to patrol northern Iraq resumed recently after a brief interval. He did not elaborate, but the interruption reportedly follows the Turkish government's objection to flights with bomb-loaded fighter jets.

"We have come to an understanding with the Turkish government in terms of continuing to successfully operate Provide Comfort," he said.

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^Warring Kurds Accept Cease-Fire In Principle<

^Eds: INSERTS fall of Kuysanjaq town to Talabani forces<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The two warring Kurdish factions of northern Iraq have agreed in principle to a cease-fire and will hold more talks in Ankara next week, a U.S. envoy said Wednesday.

“Each side has accepted the principle of a cease-fire provided that the other side does as well and provided that supporting fire from the forces of Tehran and Baghdad also ceases,” Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state said in his departure statement after concluding talks here with two rival Iraqi Kurdish leaders.

However, it still was not clear when the cease-fire would go into effect and fighting was reported continuing despite promises to halt.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party claimed Wednesday it was forced to retreat after its positions were attacked overnight by its Iranian-backed rivals, hours after the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader Jalal Talabani declared himself ready for a cease-fire.

“Thousands of Iranian soldiers conducted quite a heavy assault on us last night,” KDP spokesman Fahik Nerwayi said. “If they want a genuine cease-fire, they have to keep the Iranians out.”

An Associated Press photographer said the strategic town of Kuysanjaq had fallen to the PUK Wednesday and KDP fighters were fleeing the area.

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^Iraq Warns Kurds Against Damage to Dams<

^With Turkey-US-Iraq<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ The government warned warring Kurdish factions Wednesday against damaging any of the dams in northern Iraq, which supply the country with electricity and water.

The warning was issued by Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, in reference to two hydroelectric dams _ Darbendikhan and Dokan _ in the Kurdish-held areas in the north of the country.

"The dams are owned by the Iraqi people," Ramadan told the official Iraqi News Agency, whose report was carried in Wednesday papers throughout Iraq.

Of the many dams in Iraq, Dokan is the largest and most important, and it has changed hands three times in the latest fighting between Kurdish factions. Dokan controls water and electricity supplies to Irbil, the capital of the Kurdish region. It also affects flow into the Tigris River, which provides hydro power to Baghdad.

When the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan learned on Aug. 31 it had been defeated by the Iraqi army and the Kurdistan Democratic Party in northern Iraq, a PUK engineer "caused three out of four turbines to stop functioning" at Dokan Dam, a Kurdish source in Baghdad told The Associated Press.

For more than a month, neither the Iraqi government nor the KDP was able to put Dokan fully back on line before the dam was recaptured by the Iranian-supported PUK, said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Iraq, which has labored under a crushing U.N. trade embargo since invading Kuwait in 1990, currently suffers from daily "planned" nationwide power outages.

Ramadan's statement warned the warring Kurds against "playing" with the technical means of activating and controlling the release of water and generation of electricity at the dams.

"Dokan represents a wild card in the fighting, and this card is held by the (PUK under Jalal) Talabani," whose forces hold the technical data needed to activate all four turbines at Dokan Dam, the Kurdish source said.

If all four Dokan turbines are not soon activated, "it would then be a big problem, especially for Baghdad," the Kurdish source said.

Iraq's main concern is to keep the dams' power plants functioning, but how far Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's government would go to accomplish this remains unknown.

In Ankara, Turkey, a U.S. envoy said the two warring Kurdish factions of northern Iraq have agreed in principle to a cease-fire and will hold more talks next week.

However, it still was not clear when the cease-fire would go into effect and fighting was reported continuing despite promises to halt.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party claimed Wednesday it was forced to retreat after its positions were attacked overnight by its Iranian-backed rivals, hours after the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader Jalal Talabani declared himself ready for a cease-fire.

An Associated Press photographer said the strategic town of Kuysanjaq had fallen to the PUK Wednesday and KDP fighters were fleeing the area.

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^Eds: CORRECTS in 4th graf, distances of Kuysanjaq from Irbil and Dokan Dam; spelling of PUK spokesman's last name in 5th graf; ADDS photographer's name in 3rd graf.<

^Kurdish Ceasefire Holds Despite Skirmishes<

DEGALA, Iraq (AP) _ The U.S.-brokered cease-fire between rival Kurdish factions appeared holding Thursday in northern Iraq, despite skirmishes between the two groups east of the provincial capital of Irbil.

Spokesmen for the Iraqi-backed Kurdish Democratic Party and the Iranian-supported Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said their forces were honoring the truce, which took effect at midnight (2100 GMT) Wednesday.

Associated Press Photographer Burhan Ozbilici in KDP-held Degala on Thursday reported skirmishes between the KDP and guerrillas from nearby Kuysanjaq, which is held by the PUK.

Kuysanjaq is about 60 kilometers (40 miles) east of Irbil, which the KDP holds, and about 40 kilometers (25 miles) west of strategic Dokan Dam, which the the PUK still held as of Wednesday, according to the Turkish news agency, Anatolia.

"We agreed to the request by ... (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert) Pellitreau, who called for a ceasefire," PUK spokesman Latif Rashid in London told The Associated Press by telephone to Nicosia, Cyprus.

PUK leader Jalal "Talibani made it clear without any conditions From last night at 12 o'clock local time (in northern Iraq), we have observed" the truce, Rashid said.

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Spokesmen for the Iraqi-backed Kurdish Democratic Party and the Iranian-supported Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said their forces were honoring the truce, which took effect at midnight (2100 GMT) Wednesday.

An Associated Press photographer in KDP-held Degala on Thursday reported skirmishes between the KDP and guerrillas from nearby Kuysanjaq, which is held by the PUK.

Kuysanjaq is about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Irbil, which the KDP holds, and about 60 kilometers (40 miles) from strategic Dokan Dam, which the PUK still held as of Wednesday, according to the Turkish news agency, Anatolia.

"We agreed to the request by ... (U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert) Pellitreau, who called for a ceasefire," PUK spokesman Latif Rafshid in London told The Associated Press by telephone to Nicosia, Cyprus.

PUK leader Jalal "Talibani made it clear without any conditions From last night at 12 o'clock local time (in northern Iraq), we have observed" the truce, Rafshid said.

In Ankara, Turkey, a PUK statement Thursday said: "Field report from the front lines indicate that the cease-fire has gone into effect as scheduled and continues to hold as of 10 a.m. local time."

A KDP spokesman in Ankara, Faik Nerweyi, told the AP he, too, had no reports of fighting in northern Iraq as of Thursday.

"The main thing is for the Iranians to go out. That's the best guarantee for a cease-fire," he said of alleged aid the KDP claims Iranian forces have given to the PUK.

Journalists who have been all over the region for a week have said there is no evidence of the KDP's claims of Iranian forces involved; and likewise, no evidence of the PUK's claims that Iraqi army troops are helping the KDP.

Dokan, the largest and most important of Iraq's many hydroelectric dams, controls water and power supplies to Irbil, the capital of the Kurdish region. It also affects water flow into the Tigris River, which provides hydro-electric power to Baghdad, Iraq's capital.

The dam has changed hands three times in the latest fighting and is a key target for both Kurdish groups.

United Nations officials in Ankara had no information on any breach of the cease-fire, and no contact with U.N. officials in northern Iraq was possible.

Pelletreau who hammered out the truce with PUK leader Jalal Talabani in Ankara and KDP leader Massoud Barzani in a Turkish town bordering Iraq earlier this week, on Wednesday was reported leaving Ankara, en route to what U.S. officials termed a long-planned visit to the Gulf region.

Baghdad has meanwhile taken a dim view of the cease-fire, accusing the United States of not being serious in finding a solution to the Kurdish fighting in the north.

"America doesn't want northern Iraq to be an oasis of security, stability and prosperity, as it used to be during the self-rule days under Baghdad's government," the Iraqi official newspaper al-Jumhuriya said Wednesday.

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^Kurdish Evacuees Leave Turkey For United States<

ADANA, Turkey, (AP) _ Some 600 Kurdish dissidents and their families left for the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam Tuesday to be resettled in the United States.

The Kurds, most of them members of the CIA-aided Iraqi National Congress which opposes Saddam Hussein, were evacuated into Turkey from northern Iraq earlier this week.

They were feared to be in danger after Saddam regained influence in the Kurdish-controlled north of the country seven weeks ago.

The evacuees were put on two planes on a U.S.-led airbase near this southern city. The planes took off after the evacuees went through medical and identification checks, the Turkish news agency Anatolia reported. It was not immediately known when they would arrive in Guam.

Those eligible for political refugee status will be allowed to resettle on the U.S. mainland.

The CIA helped the Iraqi National Congress with news releases, books and radio and television broadcasts, but there is no indication it gave them military aid.

Last month, another group of about 2,000 Iraqi Kurds who had been affiliated with U.S. aid groups in Kurdish areas were flown to Guam.

(sf)

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^Kurdish Peace Talks Open To Consolidate Cease-Fire<

By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) ÷ U.S.-brokered negotiations between Iraq's rival Kurdish factions opened Wednesday amid hopes that a lasting peace accord between them will pave the way for the implementation of a long-delayed oil-for-food deal.

The two Kurdish groups ÷ The Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which is supported by Iraq ÷ halted their latest round of fighting last week after U.S. mediation.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau is chairing the talks in the Turkish capital, Ankara. He told delegates in opening remarks: ``We are here to help you in consolidating the cease-fire and in stabilizing the situation in northern Iraq.''

Officials from Turkey, which is fighting a long-running Kurdish insurrection in its southeast, and Britain are taking part in the talks.

Both Turkish and U.S. officials have indicated that the primary goal of the talks was to establish a lasting peace deal that would allow the oil-for-food between the U.N. Security Council and Iraq to be implemented.

The deal, signed in May, allows Iraq to sell dlrs 2 billion worth of oil during a period of 180 days to buy food and medicine.

The supplies are sorely needed in Iraq, which has been hard hit by six years of crippling U.N. sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The sanctions include a ban on Iraq's vital oil exports and a freeze of its overseas assets.

Baghdad has agreed to the conditions set by the Security Council for allowing the deal to be implemented, including the earmarking of part of the revenues for the Kurds in the north.

But fighting between the two Kurdish factions in late August and September in which Saddam sent his army in support of the KDP against the PUK have led to the deal being delayed again on the grounds of poor security.

The intervention of Saddam's army in Iraqi Kurdistan, declared a safe-haven by the United States and its Gulf War allies in 1991, earned Iraq U.S. cruise missile strikes on Sept. 3-4. It has also disrupted U.N. relief operations in the area.

``Both Kurdish groups want the oil-for-food deal to start as soon as possible, so that should give them the incentive to agree to lasting peace,' ' said a U.S. official close to the talks, insisting on anonymity.

The two factions jointly ran a de-facto independent administration in northern Iraq from 1991 to 1994, when their differences led to fighting. They have since fought each other sporadically, with various cease-fires proving short-lived.

The KDP and PUK have been on-and-off enemies for years. They differ over what policy to adopt toward the Baghdad government to obtain autonomy for their region, where they also vie for dominance.

``Our sincere wish is the establishment of peace and stability in Northern Iraq ... to stop terrorists

benefiting from the power vacuum in the region,' ' Turkish foreign ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said Wednesday.

Turkish Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey have set up bases in Northern Iraq, from which they regularly launch cross-border attacks on Turkish targets.

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^Kurdish Peace Talks Open To Consolidate Cease-Fire<

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Turkish Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey have set up bases in northern Iraq, from which they often launch cross-border attacks on Turkish targets.

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^No Kurdish Settlement Without Iran: Foreign Minister<

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) _ A peaceful settlement between Kurdish factions fighting in northern Iraq will not be possible without Iran's assistance, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Wednesday.

''Without the active contribution of Iran, its difficult to reach a constructive and peaceful settlement between the two groups,'' Velayati said,

The two groups _ the Iraq-supported Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, backed by Iran _ halted their fighting last week after the United States mediated a cease-fire.

Talks aimed at reaching a lasting settlement to the conflict began in Ankara, Turkey on Wednesday and were chaired by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau.

''Everybody knows, even countries from the West, that without an active and positive contribution from Iran, they cannot reach a concrete conclusion,'' Velayati said.

He said Iran approves of a Turkish proposal for the two neighbors to try mediating between the two Kurdish factions.

The KDP, with help from troops and tanks of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, drove the PUK out of most of northern Iraq in late August. The United States retaliated by firing cruise missiles on southern Iraq.

But the PUK stormed back this month, seizing the strategic town of Sulaymaniyah and the Dokan Dam, which controls the water and power supply to the KDP's stronghold, the regional capital, Irbil.

^(str-ti/lak)<

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^Kurdish Peace Talks Open to Shore Up Cease Fire<

^Eds: AMs. UPDATES with first day over on positive notes, Turkish foreign minister quote, Iranian statement, other detail.<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The first day of U.S.-brokered talks by Iraq's rival Kurdish factions ended on a positive note Wednesday.

The Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Iraqi-supported Kurdistan Democratic Party halted their latest fighting in northern Iraq last week after U.S. mediation.

"The discussions are proceeding in an atmosphere of harmony and have been very productive," said Onur Dymen, Turkish deputy foreign minister hosting the meeting. "Making the ceasefire a permanent one is on top of the agenda."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, chairman of the talks, acknowledged "a number of difficulties, but we are working very hard on them."

The Kurdish delegations will reconvene Thursday, expected to be the last day of this round of talks.

Turkish and U.S. officials have indicated that their primary goal was to establish a lasting peace agreement that would allow an oil-for-food between the U.N. Security Council and Iraq to be implemented. The deal allows Iraq to sell dlrs 2 billion in oil during a 180-day period to buy food and medicine.

The supplies are sorely needed in Iraq, hard-hit by U.N. sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The sanctions include a ban on Iraq's oil exports and have frozen its overseas assets.

Iraq has agreed to conditions set by the Security Council for allowing the limited oil sales, including using some of the revenue to help the Kurds.

Saddam Hussein, however, sent his army into the region in late August to aid the KDP in fighting against the PUK. That led the United Nations, citing poor security, to delay implementing the oil-for-food deal.

The KDP and PUK have been on-and-off enemies for years, vying for dominance in their region and differing over what policy to adopt toward the Baghdad government to obtain autonomy.

Saddam's intervention in northern Iraq, declared a safe haven in 1991 by the United States and its Gulf War allies, led to U.S. missile strikes Sept. 3-4 on strategic sites in southern Iraq. It also disrupted U.N. relief operations in Iraq.

(yo-sf/djw)

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^Kurdish Leader Accuses Rival Of Planning Fresh Attack<

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) _ The leader of an Iranian-sponsored Kurdish faction has accused his Iraqi-backed rival of plotting to launch a new attack on his group in northern Iraq.

``Massoud Barzani's forces, with the cooperation of the Iraqi regime, are getting ready for a new attack on us,`` Jalal Talbani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said in an interview with the Tehran daily newspaper Abrar.

Talbani claimed that Barzani, who leads the Kurdistan Democratic Party, wanted to postpone upcoming talks between the two parties for two weeks to enable him to carry out the attack. The two sides are scheduled to meet in Turkey later this week with U.S. mediation.

The KDP, with help from troops and tanks of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, drove the PUK out of most of northern Iraq in late August. Saddam's involvement triggered U.S. cruise missile attacks on southern Iraq in reprisal.

But the PUK stormed back this month, seizing the strategic town of Sulaymaniyah and the Dokan Dam, which controls the water and power supply to the KDP's stronghold, the regional capital, Irbil.

A cease-fire has been in place for the past week and appears to have been largely observed.

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^Iraqi Kurdish Groups Sign Peace Agreement<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups signed a peace agreement Thursday pledging to maintain a cease-fire and to establish stability in northern Iraq.

Under the auspices of the United States and Britain, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party signed a far reaching deal that set up steps to rebuild a regional government which had collapsed three years ago.

The document signed made it clear that Iraqi territorial integrity would still be respected.

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The deal may clear the way for a a long-delayed deal arranged by the United States for Baghdad to allow it to sell oil to raise money for food and medicine.

The Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, supported by Iraq, halted their latest round of fighting last week and agreed to talks under U.S. mediation.

Various cease-fires between the rivals, fighting each other since 1994, were broken in the past.

The oil-for-food deal, signed in May, allows Iraq to sell dlrs 2 billion worth of oil during a 6-month period to buy humanitarian supplies.

The supplies are badly needed in all parts of Iraq, especially by the Kurds, who also have been cut off by Saddam Hussein.

U.N. sanctions have barred Iraq to sell oil, its main source of income, since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

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^Iraqi Kurdish Groups Sign Peace Agreement<

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^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups signed a peace agreement Thursday pledging to maintain a cease-fire and to establish stability in northern Iraq.

Under mediation by the United States and Britain, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party signed a far reaching deal that set up steps to rebuild a regional government that collapsed three years ago.

The document signed made it clear that the Kurdish-domination region would not seek to break away from Iraq.

The deal could allow for the long-delayed implementation of a deal between the United Nations and Iraq that permits Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil to buy food and medicine. Iraq has been under crippling international sanctions, including a ban on oil sales, since it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

The Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, supported by Iraq, halted their latest round of fighting last week and agreed to talks.

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U.N. sanctions have barred Iraq to sell oil, its main source of income, since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Fighting between the two Kurdish factions escalated in late August. Saddam sent his army in support of the KDP.

The United States punished Saddam's intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan with cruise missile strikes last month.

The Kurdish factions have been on-and-off enemies for years. They differ over what policy to adopt toward the Baghdad government to obtain autonomy for their region, where they also vie for dominance.

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^Iraqi Kurdish Groups Sign Peace Agreement<

^Eds: ADDS details about agreement, comments from U.S. and Turkish officials, background. No pickup<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups signed a peace agreement Thursday pledging to maintain a cease-fire and seek stability in strife-torn northern Iraq.

Under mediation by the United States, Britain and Turkey, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party signed a far-reaching deal that set up steps to rebuild a regional government which had collapsed three years ago.

The document made it clear the Kurdish-dominated region would not seek to break away from Iraq.

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The Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, supported by Iraq, halted their latest round of fighting last week and agreed to talks under U.S. mediation.

The oil-for-food deal, signed in May, allows Iraq to sell dollars 2 billion worth of oil during a 6-month period to buy humanitarian supplies.

The supplies are badly needed in all parts of Iraq, especially by the Kurds, who also have been cut off by Saddam Hussein. U.N. sanctions have barred Iraq to sell oil, its main source of income, since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

The two groups, fighting each other since 1994, broke various cease-fires mediated by the United States. But the latest document is the most comprehensive pledge for peace, including support for plans to form a joint government and hold elections.

Turkey, fighting its own Kurdish rebels, got many of the points it was insisting on in the agreement.

The document pledged "preventing all terrorist elements in Northern Iraq, especially the PKK," referring to the Turkish Kurdish guerrillas. The PKK has bases in northern Iraq, from where it launches cross-border attacks.

The Kurdish groups also pledged not to seek help from any outside powers, a reference to Tehran and Baghdad.

A supervisory monitoring group made up of Turkish, American, British, the Iraqi Kurdish representatives will be based in Ankara, the document said. Another meeting on the peace plan is scheduled for Nov. 15 in Ankara.

"This is a good blue print for re-establishing the Kurdish regional government in northern Iraq," said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, who led the mediation team.

Thursday's agreement set the two sides' Oct. 23 positions as the demarcation line. The two parties promised to release all captured guerrillas, not to interrupt distribution of humanitarian aid, power and water supplies to each other.

Saddam sent his army in support of the KDP when fighting escalated in late August. The United States punished Saddam's intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan with cruise missile strikes last month. Meanwhile, the KDP alleged that Iranian troops were helping its rival.

The two factions have been on-and-off enemies for years. They differ over what policy to adopt toward the Baghdad government to obtain autonomy for their region, where they also vie for dominance.

(yo-sf-sh-vls)

AP-LD-10-31-96 1845GMT<

ank rom 233 87 intw

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraqi Kurdish Group Retracts Some Pledges on Peace Document<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A day after two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups announced a far-reaching peace agreement, one of the sides Friday retreated from some of its pledges.

The Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party issued a statement saying it was only committed to the maintenance of the U.S.-mediated cease-fire, continuation of talks, the non-disruption of civilian services, exchange of captives and the demarcation line in northern Iraq.

The other points, which mainly focus on re-establishing a regional government in the region, must be discussed with leaders before they can be approved, the Democratic Party said.

The KDP and its Iranian-backed rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, have been fighting each other sporadically since 1994 in northern Iraq, a semi-autonomous area where a U.S.-led air force patrols to protect against attacks by Saddam Hussein's forces. The Kurdish groups halted their latest clashes last week.

The items the KDP balked at included one saying the parties would not "seek the intervention of any other forces." KDP's collaboration with Saddam in August to take the Kurdish capital Irbil from the PUK led to punishing missile attacks by the United States on Baghdad's air defense systems.

The agreement _ mediated by the United States, Britain and Turkey _ was seen as opening the way for the long-delayed implementation of a deal between the United Nations and Baghdad that permits Iraq to sell oil to buy food and medicine.

Iraq has been under crippling international sanctions, including a ban on oil sales, since it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

The United States has prevented the oil deal to be implemented, citing instability and security concerns in northern Iraq.

(yo/bm)

AP-LD-11-01-96 1942GMT<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraqi Kurdish Groups Resume Talks Despite Foot-Dragging<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups resumed peace talks under U.S. supervision Friday despite a bid by one side to postpone the meeting.

The request by the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, had put the resumption of talks in limbo up until Thursday night.

But U.S. pressure was effective once again in bringing the Kurdish rivals to the bargaining table.

"We've always been committed to talking, and now that Mr. Pelletreau is personally involved, we'll be there," KDP spokesman Safeen Dizayhee said.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau chaired the first round of talks at the end of last month and arrived here Thursday to head the second round.

The KDP and the Iranian-backed rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, agreed to a cease-fire Oct. 23 after three years of sporadic fighting.

Since the Gulf War, Kurdish dominated northern Iraq has been a de-facto state, protected from Saddam Hussein by a U.S.-led allied air force.

The first round of Ankara talks between the two rival groups produced a document establishing a permanent cease-fire and steps toward re-establishing a joint regional administration.

But the Iraqi-backed KDP retreated from most of its pledges the day after the talks ended, saying it was only committed to the cease-fire.

"We were surprised by the KDP action last time," Shazad Saib, the PUK's Ankara representative, said. "There is no other way but to put behind us the fighting and come together as in the past."

The second round will focus on fine-tuning the peace-monitoring mechanism agreed to last time and the restoration of civilian services as winter approaches, Pelletreau said at the opening of the talks.

He made it clear that the process will be a long one.

"Restoring a lasting stability in the North will require the re-establishment of trust between the KDP and the PUK," Pelletreau said.

Baghdad has denounced the Ankara talks, calling U.S. mediation meddling in its internal affairs. But the talks and a long-term cease-fire are essential for the implementation of a long-delayed oil-for-food deal between Iraq and the United Nations.

(yo)

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld<

^Iraqi Kurdish Groups Resume Talks Despite Foot-Dragging<

^Eds: UPDATES with new U.S. aid pledge of dlrs 3.7 million<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups resumed peace talks under U.S. supervision Friday despite a bid by one side to postpone the meeting.

As the talks went on, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau announced that his government had pledged another dlrs 3.7 million for "sanitation and emergency medical need" in northern Iraq.

The money would be given to UNICEF, Pelletreau told reporters.

The United States promised dlrs 7.3 million last month in response to a U.N. appeal for food relief in Iraq, and earmarked it for the Kurds. That announcement came a day before the first round of talks had started in Ankara.

The request, 2nd graf pvs<

(yo-sh/djw)

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11-15 10:16p

Iraqi Kurd Refugees Dying in Freezing Camps, UNHCR Says

GENEVA (AP) - The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees appealed to Iran Friday to resettle 65,000 Iraqi Kurd refugees housed in freezing mountain centers in north west Iran.

The aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres reported that one or two children are dying each night because of the cold and food supplies are erratic.

"We are very worried about the situation," said UNHCR spokeswoman Christiane Berthiaume.

"The refugees are living in terrible conditions ... in tents. We had no access there for two weeks. If they stay there they will die."

They must be relocated as soon as possible to proper camps on the plains where climatic conditions are less harsh, she said.

The refugees fled fighting in Iraq in September and mid October. The situation is still too unsafe there for them to return, Berthiaume said.

(cfh)

151915 Nov GMT

Iraqi Kurdish Groups End Round of Talks With Little Progress

Eds: UPDATES with talks concluding, little headway, details

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups concluded their second round of peace talks Friday with little headway but pledged to hold further negotiations.

The Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, and the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, re-affirmed their commitment to a ceasefire declared on Oct. 23, which has held since then.

The initial round of talks last month produced a far-reaching document listing steps to re-establish a defunct joint regional administration, but the KDP retracted most of its pledges the next day.

Friday's talks were almost postponed on KDP request but last-minute pressure by the United States brought the sides together. But it was clear that there was a long way to go before the Kurds could discuss re-forming a government.

The two sides had not yet agreed on how a demarcation line between them would be drawn and who would be in the peace-monitoring group envisioned in the first round.

Safeen Dizayhee, KDP's Ankara representative, said the PUK should withdraw from a strategic point northeast of the Kurdish capital Irbil before the line was drawn.

A joint statement issued at the end said the supervisory peace-monitoring committee, which includes the United States, Britain and Turkey, would meet next week to discuss such issues.

"Political negotiations will start as soon as the ceasefire is sufficiently established," said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, who is chairing the talks.

There was no date set for the next round of negotiations.

Earlier Friday Pelletreau announced that his government had pledged another dlrs 3.7 million for "sanitation and emergency medical need" in northern Iraq.

The money, 3rd graf pvs

(yo-sh/djw)

RMW1915-----

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karin. in cruising archives, see a may 29, 1991, story saying 390,000 out of 450,000 kurds in turkey had returned, and remaining kurds down to about 13,000 in june 8 story.

as for iran, numbers range from 900,000 to 1.2 million kurds going there, with most returning in may. couldn't find exact number, but perhaps cairo could help. all best. djw.

rome

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq<

^Turkey Reopens Bridge To Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey on Sunday reopened a bridge after five years to ease traffic at the sole border crossing with Iraq, the foreign ministry said Monday.

With the opening of the bridge over the Hezil River, Turkey aims to increase trade at the Habur border point and help the local economy, crippled by the U.N. embargo on Iraq.

Trucks from Turkey transport food and other supplies to northern Iraq, and return with cheap Iraqi gasoline in their extra fuel tanks to resell at home. The bridge, closed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, was damaged by flood, and truckers had been using an older, narrower span.

The trade violates U.N. sanctions but is tolerated by the United Nations because Turkey complains of losses from the embargo.

When asked about the significance of the opening of the bridge,

Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said no ``political significance'' should be attached to the bridge opening.

(sh/djw)

AP-LD-11-18-96 1121GMT<

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^Turkey Reopens Bridge To Iraq<

Eds:INCORPORATES BC-Iraq-Turkey<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey on Sunday reopened a bridge after five years to ease traffic at the sole border crossing with Iraq, the foreign ministry said Monday.

With the opening of the bridge over the Hezil River, Turkey aims to increase trade at the Habur border point and help the local economy, crippled by the U.N. embargo on Iraq.

In Iraq, the prospect for increased cross-border trade with Turkey pleased money-traders and boosted the value of the dinar.

The dinar improved in value in relation to the U.S. dollar, moving from 1,700 dinar to the dollar to 1,500.

Trucks from Turkey transport food and other supplies to northern Iraq, and return with cheap Iraqi gasoline in their extra fuel tanks to resell at home. The bridge, closed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, was damaged by flood, and truckers had been using an older, narrower span.

The trade violates U.N. sanctions but is tolerated by the United Nations because Turkey complains of losses from the embargo.

The world body also sees it as a way to alleviate hardships suffered by Iraq's 20 million people.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said no "political significance" should be attached to the bridge opening.

(sh/sf/djw)

AP-LD-11-18-96 1322GMT<

Waning Donor Interest Threw Iraqi Kurds into Worse Poverty

AP Photo NY111; AP Graphic IRAQI KURDS

EDITOR'S NOTE: The United Nations oil-for-food deal with Iraq now moving toward completion is intended partly to aid the Kurds of northern Iraq. An Associated Press reporter recently visited the impoverished region.

By YALMAN ONARAN

Associated Press Writer

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) - Small children in torn clothes scamper along narrow cobblestone streets, guiding bicycle tires with sticks. Their bare feet splash into milky-colored sewage water in the gutters.

Getting ready for the approaching winter, a woman uses thumbtacks to fasten a transparent sheet of plastic over a broken window.

And this is the best neighborhood in the capital of the Kurdish region in northern Iraq. Such scenes are common throughout the area, which suffers from a double economic embargo.

All parts of Iraq have been barred from world trade by a United Nations embargo imposed after Saddam Hussein sent the Iraqi army into Kuwait six years ago. The Kurdish region has been cut off from internal Iraqi trade since an uprising against Saddam after the Gulf War.

Adding to the region's woes, two Kurdish factions have battled sporadically for two years over control of the enclave. They ended their latest round of fighting last month after Saddam's troops aided one side and the United States retaliated by firing missiles at Iraqi military targets.

There may be some relief in sight. Iraq's government and the United Nations appear headed for final agreement on a deal to let Baghdad sell dlr 2 billion worth of oil over six months to pay for food and medicine for its people.

Needs are great throughout Iraq, especially in the economically backward Kurdish region.

The Kurds' life worsened as waning international interest in their plight decreased humanitarian aid, all that keeps them alive.

"For many years, most donors gave specifically for northern Iraq," said Robin Mills, deputy coordinator of U.N. operations in the Kurdish region.

Now, donor nations have stopped earmarking aid for the Kurds and instead give to Iraq in general, Mills said.

The United States recently pledged dlr 11 million for food and medical aid to the Kurds for a 12-month period as part of its effort to encourage an end to the factional fighting. But that amounts to only dlr 3 for each person in the region.

Meanwhile, other countries have promised only dlr 1.6 million toward the U.N. goal of dlr 40 million in aid for the region over a one-year period stretching into 1997.

There is little work in the mountainous region. The terrain leaves little room for agriculture, and there are shortages of fertilizer, seed and farm equipment.

"Until five years ago, everybody was getting paid by Baghdad," Mills said, referring to government jobs in the region that have disappeared since the uprising. "The double embargo has hurt incredibly."

Zerrin Sidik has survived on U.N. handouts and help from relatives since her husband died in the rebellion.

She stops putting up the plastic cover on her window to invite a reporter into the one-room house she shares with her four children.

Three thin mattresses are piled in a corner. A gas stove and a milk crate holding a few pots is the kitchen. A small table near the window is where 10-year-old Muhabbet does her homework and the family eats. A gas lamp sits on the table. There is no electricity or running water.

"If I had lots of money, I'd buy a refrigerator first, so the tomatoes and the cucumbers would be cold and fresh," Muhabbet says.

There are few vegetables in the bazaars - tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, potatoes, lima beans. Dingy stores stock months-old Turkish crackers, cheap candy and Farsi-Cola from Iran. Stringy goat meat is sold in butcher shops swarming with flies.

Besides humanitarian aid, the only food imported into the region comes on Turkish trucks smuggling a few sacks of flour or sugar. The truckers use the goods to buy cheap gasoline that can be sold back home at a profit.

Halit Hassan, a father of three, sells gasoline in plastic drums by the roadside but earns only dlr 4 a month. His home near Irbil is in a former jail used to house Iranian POWs during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war.

Each shabby cell with a tiny barred window holds a family of five to 10. The stench of urine fills the dark corridors where a goat romps among playing children.

"There's no land to harvest in my village," Hassan said. "So I came here, hoping I could sell something. But the money I make is not enough to live like a human being. The life of the goat you saw is the level we can sustain."

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^BC-Turkey-US-Kurds<

^Turkey To Assist U.S. Evacuate Kurds from Northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey has agreed to a U.S. request to help evacuate a third group of Kurds and other minorities from northern Iraq for humanitarian reasons, an official said Wednesday.

The United States wants to move out 5,000 Kurds and other minority groups, who worked for U.S.-backed or financed organizations, fearing that they may be in danger from Iraqi security forces.

“We have agreed to the U.S. request from a humanitarian point of view,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Sermet Atacanli told a news conference Wednesday. “The evacuation is expected to start at the beginning of December.”

Turkey reluctantly agreed to the transfer of two previous groups of Kurds, amounting to more than 2,700 people in September and October. Their stay in Turkey was limited to a few days before being flown to Guam, a U.S. outpost in the Pacific, for processing before resettlement in the United States.

The government fears that Turkish Kurdish rebels, who stage hit-and-run attacks from bases in northern Iraq, could infiltrate into the group to reach Turkey.

The latest group, consisting of Iraqi Muslims, Assyrians, Chaldeans as well as Kurds, also will be flown to Guam.

(sf)

AP-LD-11-27-96 1311GMT<

Turkey Denies Aid Agencies Road Access to Iraq, Group Says

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - The international aid agency Save the Children said Saturday it may be forced to suspend its operations in northern Iraq if Turkey continues to block access to the area.

The agency said Turkish authorities have closed the border to aid agencies since August when fighting broke out between rival Kurdish guerrillas and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein sent troops to intervene.

"Without help to secure a route in and out of the country, and greater protection for locally employed staff, the agency is worried that it may soon be forced to withdraw from its program," the group said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press.

"We are very concerned. We cannot go on much longer," said Brownwen Lewis, Save the Children's Iraq coordinator, in a telephone interview from London. She said the agency may have to withdraw its operations in three weeks.

Turkish authorities were not available for comment.

The agency statement said only its local employees and one international worker were in northern Iraq and that the group has been forced to oversee its dlr 4 million program from outside Iraq.

It said other international non-governmental organizations were also facing the same problem.

The northern Iraqi Kurdish enclave was established by the victorious Persian Gulf War allies in 1991 to protect the rebellious Kurds from Iraqi forces.

Turkey, which is fighting its own Kurdish separatists, and Iran, which also borders northern Iraq and has crushed uprisings among its Kurds, both oppose the emergence of an autonomous state for Iraq's 3.5 million Kurds.

Save the Children said it was concerned that when the U.N. oil-for-food deal is enforced, there will be no international aid workers to help distribute the food to needy people.

Iraq earlier this week accepted the remaining U.N. conditions blocking implementation of the deal, which will allow Iraq to sell dlr 2 billion worth of oil over six months to buy food and medicine.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Relief<

^Turkey Denies Blocking Road Access to Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey denied Monday that it was blocking road access to all aid agencies operating in northern Iraq, saying only some groups have been barred for certain reasons.

The international agency Save The Children claimed Saturday that Turkey had closed its Iraqi border to aid groups since August.

"We do not have a blanket policy against all aid groups," said Sermet Atacanli, Turkish foreign ministry spokesman. "Some groups, however, have gone beyond their humanitarian missions in northern Iraq. We evaluate them case by case. Many are still allowed through."

Turkey has accused some agencies of aiding the Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey. The rebels have bases in northern Iraq, where a de-facto Kurdish state was established after the Gulf War.

Under a U.N. blockade barring the sale of Iraqi oil and having ceased relations with the central government in Baghdad, the Iraqi Kurds have relied heavily on humanitarian assistance.

However, aid operations were dealt a heavy blow when fighting between two Iraqi Kurdish factions broke out in August. Saddam Hussein's tanks marched into the Kurdish capital Irbil on invitation from one of the factions. Most foreign staffers of aid groups as well as thousands of Kurds working for U.S. agencies fled, fearing reprisal from Saddam.

Last week, Baghdad accepted the remaining U.N. conditions blocking the implementation an oil-for-food deal, which will allow Iraq to sell dlrs 2 billion worth of oil to buy food and medicine.

Save the Children said it was concerned that when the deal is enforced, there will be no international aid groups to help distribute the food to needy people.

(yo)

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Refugee Camp<

^Some Turkish Kurdish Refugees To Return Home From Iraq<

^By SELCAN HACAOGLU=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Some of the 14,000 Kurdish refugees, who fled to northern Iraq as a result of Turkish-Kurdish battling three years ago, will return home voluntarily, a U.N. official said Tuesday.

But the return would be short of Turkey's expectations of dissolving the United Nations camp in northern Iraq where they have been sheltered. Turkey claims the camp is under Kurdish rebel control.

“We understand it will be closed,” Sermet Atacanli, foreign ministry spokesman, told a news conference Monday.

But other sources do not foresee a closure of the Atrush camp, 7 kilometers (45 miles) away from the Turkish border.

“Some families expressed their intention to return, but the number for them is not clear yet,” Metin Corabatir, spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees here said Tuesday.

“The camp will be closed only if all refugees leave.”

Faik Nerweyi, a spokesman for the Iraqi Kurdish group Kurdistan Democratic Party which controls the camp area, said “some refugees are not willing to go back.”

“We have confirmed the influence of the Kurdish rebels in the camp,” Corabatir said. “But its a refugee camp, not a military base.”

Mostly elder men, women and children younger than 14 live in tents in Atrush, Corabatir said.

The volunteer return of refugees followed Turkey's recent announcement that they will not be subject to “any recrimination or legal action.”

Turkey assures to feed, accommodate and financially support each returnee until they resettle. If needed, families will also be provided with construction materials to repair their homes.

It was not clear when the first group would travel to Turkey.

In the last year, only 70 people returned from the camp in small groups.

The government accuses the guerrillas, fighting for autonomy in Turkey's southeast, of forcing or encouraging the flight of refugees to win international sympathy.

But the army also came under fire for forcibly evacuating villages, believed to be assisting the rebels.

The guerrillas have military bases in northern Iraq.

(sh)

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^New Group of Kurdish Evacuees Crosses Into Turkey for United States<

ANKARA Turkey, (AP) _ The first group of some 5,000 mostly Iraqi Kurdish dissidents crossed into Turkey on Wednesday on their way to the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam before being resettled in the United States, a U.S. Embassy official said.

The group consists of workers, and their dependents, of U.S.-based nongovernmental relief organizations.

They were scheduled to be taken to the southeastern city of Batman later Wednesday before being flown to Guam on Friday for processing before resettlement in the United States, said the American official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The evacuation of the entire group was expected to take about 10 days.

The United States decided to evacuate the group which also included other minority groups, such as Arabs and Assyrians, fearing that they may be in danger from Iraqi security forces.

More than 2,700 Iraqi Kurds were evacuated for similar reasons in September and October. They were mostly members of the CIA-aided Iraqi National Congress which opposes Saddam Hussein.

They were feared to be in danger after Saddam regained influence in the Kurdish-controlled north of the country after a fighting erupted between rival Iraqi Kurdish groups in northern Iraq in August.

Turkey reluctantly agreed to the transfer of the groups on the condition that their stay in Turkey would be limited.

The Turkish government fears that Turkish Kurdish rebels, who stage hit-and-run attacks from bases in northern Iraq, could infiltrate into the group to reach Turkey.

AP-LD-12-04-96 0811GMT<

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^BC-Turkey-US-Kurds<

^350 Kurdish Evacuees Flown to Guam for U.S. Asylum<

BATMAN, Turkey (AP) _ A first contingent of some 350 evacuees from northern Iraq left this southeastern town Friday for the U.S. territory of Guam, an official said.

The group, consisting of Kurds and other northern Iraqi minority groups, boarded a DC-9 jet after an identity check, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

They eventually will be resettled in the United States.

They are part of a total of 5,000 northern Iraqis and their dependents who worked for U.S.-backed agencies. The United States decided to help evacuate them last month, fearing they might be in danger from Iraqi security forces.

A total of 836 evacuees have crossed into Turkey from northern Iraq since the beginning of the week, the official said. The entire evacuation is expected to be completed next week.

More than 2,700 Iraqi Kurds were evacuated in September and October after Saddam Hussein regained influence in the Kurdish-controlled north of the country in August, following fighting between two rival Iraqi groups.

They were mostly members of the CIA-aided Iraqi National Congress which opposes Saddam.

Most of them have been resettled in the United States.

(sf/djw)

AP-LD-12-06-96 1413GMT<

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Turkish jets pound Kurdish rebel bases in northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish warplanes and helicopter gunships have bombed two Turkish Kurdish rebel bases in northern Iraq, a military officer said Friday.

The air raid was carried out Thursday after reconnaissance flights reported increased activities in two bases some 15 kilometers (nine miles) inside Iraq.

The Turkish air force often attacks rebel bases across the border in an effort to thwart the guerrilla from crossing into Turkey.

The rebels, fighting for autonomy in Turkey's southeast since 1984, launch hit-and-run attacks from their bases inside Iraq. The conflict has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

(sh)

AP-LD-12-20-96 1238GMT<

-GAZETECİLERE ''ÇEKİÇ GÜÇ'' BRIFİNGİ...
 -BİRLEŞİK GÖREV KUVVETİ'NİN
 TÜRK KOMUTANI TUĞGENERAL ŞANLITÜRK:
 -''ÇEKİÇ GÜÇ'ÜN YAPTIĞI HER TÜRLÜ FAALİYET,
 YÜZDE YÜZ TÜRK TARAFININ KONTROLÜNDEDİR''
 -''BGK'NİN ELİNDEKİ HER TÜRLÜ BİLGİ, AYNI
 ZAMANDA GENELKURMAY'IN ELİNDEDİR''
 -''ÇEKİÇ GÜÇ'E AİT UÇAKLAR, AYDA 18-20 GÜN
 KUZEY IRAK'TA KEŞİF UÇUŞU YAPIYOR''

(FOTOĞRAFLI)

İNCİRLİK (A.A) - incirlik'teki Türk-ABD Ortak Savunma Tesisleri'nde, Huzur Operasyonu (Provide Comfort) çerçevesinde konuşlandırılan Birleşik Görev Kuvveti'nin (Çekiç Güç), her türlü faaliyetinin, yüzde yüz oranında Türk tarafının kontrolünde olduğu bildirildi.

Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Basın ve Halkla İlişkiler Dairesi ile Çukurova Gazeteciler Cemiyeti'nin organizasyonu ile incirlik Üssü, gazetecilere gezdirildi ve Birleşik Görev Kuvveti (BGK) Türk Komutanı Hava Tuğgeneral Savaş Şanlıtürk tarafından briefing verildi.

Tuğgeneral Şanlıtürk, BGK'nın, Körfez Harekatı'nın bitiminden sonra 5 Nisan 1991 tarihinde, Kuzey Irak'ta yaşanan soykırıma karşı oluşturulduğunu hatırlatarak, ''Çekiç Güç'ün yaptığı her türlü faaliyet Türk tarafının kontrolindedir'' dedi.

BGK'nın Zaho'daki Askeri Koordinasyon Merkezi'nin 4 Eylül 1996'da çekilmesiyle, tüm unsurların incirlik'e taşındığına işaret eden Tuğgeneral Şanlıtürk, Diyarbakır'da da irtibat unsuru bulunduğunu bildirdi.

Tuğgeneral Şanlıtürk, BGK'nın, 36. paralelin kuzeyindeki sivil halkın savunmasını sağlamak amacıyla, ortalama 2-8 saatlik keşif uçuşları yaptığını ve bu uçuşların genellikle 2-2.5 saat sürdüğünü ifade etti.

Keşif uçuşlarının Awacs'ların (erken uyarı uçağı) kalkmasıyla başladığını, daha sonra F-15, F-16, F-111, Fransız Jaguar ve İngiliz Tornado savaş uçaklarının ''keşif ve koruma'' görevini üstlendiğini belirten Tuğgeneral Şanlıtürk, destek kuvvetleri ve helikopterlerin de uçuş filosuna eşlik ettiğini kaydetti.

-''KEŞİF UÇUŞLARI PERİYODİK DEĞİL''-

Ayda ortalama 18-20 kez keşif uçuşu yapıldığını kaydeden Tuğgeneral Şanlıtürk, ancak bu uçuşların periyodik olmadığını, gün ve saatlerinin sürekli değiştiğini vurguladı.

Tuğgeneral Şanlıtürk, ''Çekiç Güç'ün elindeki bilgilerin, terörle mücadele amacıyla kullanılıp, kullanılmadığı'' yolundaki bir soru üzerine de, ''BGK'nın elindeki her türlü bilgi Genelkurmay Başkanlığı'nın da elindedir. Bize şu ana kadar özel bir istihbarat talebi gelmedi'' dedi.

Tuğgeneral Şanlıtürk, bir soru üzerine de, Kuzey Irak'a yapılan son operasyona incirlik Üssü'nden katılım olmadığını açıkladı.

incirlik Üssü'nde halen BGK'ye ait, 27'si ABD'ye, 6'sı İngiltere'ye, 5'i Fransa'ya ve 4'ü Türkiye'ye ait 42 savaş uçağı olmak üzere, destek uçakları ve helikopterler ile birlikte toplam 59 uçak bulunuyor. BGK emrinde, bin 212 ABD'li, 174 İngiliz ve 111 Fransız personel görev yapıyor.

Briefingden sonra, BGK karargahı ile savaş uçakları gazetecilere gösterildi.

(MD-VS-KAN-ADA-SRD)

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey

^Iraq slams decision to renew U.S.-led mission protecting Kurds<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ A state-run Iraqi newspaper on Thursday slammed Turkey's decision to renew the U.S.-led air mission protecting Kurds in northern Iraq.

Turkey's parliament on Wednesday agreed to a six-month extension of the overflights.

The state-run Al-Thawra newspaper accused Britain and the United States of using "pressures, threats and bribes" to get Turkey's approval to continue operating from a Turkish air base.

"We strongly condemn Turkey's decision renewing the presence of foreign forces on its territories, and we consider this a new plot with the United States and Britain against Iraq," the newspaper said in an editorial.

It called the air surveillance illegal and a violation of Iraq's sovereignty.

"There are British and American pressures, threats and bribes to influence Turkish politics," the paper charged.

The editorial said it welcomed France's decision to drop out of the mission. The Al-Thawra comment was carried on the official Iraqi News Agency, which was monitored in Cairo.

After parliament's decision on Wednesday, Turkish Defense Minister Turhan Tayan announced that France no longer would participate.

In Paris, however, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman said no official decision had been made.

The air surveillance known as Operation Provide Comfort was launched after the Gulf War to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq following a failed 1991 rebellion against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

While the Turkish government terminated the mandate of the operation, it approved a scaled-back mission to go into effect the day the old one ends, Jan 1.

Since its inception, the mission had been renewed every six months after rancorous debate in the Turkish parliament.

More than 50 British, French and U.S. warplanes take off from Turkey's southern Incirlik base almost daily for reconnaissance flights over northern Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds have maintained a de facto autonomous state in northern Iraq under the mission's protection.

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^BC-France-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru

^France won't participate in U.S.-led mission protecting Kurds<

^Eds: AMs; LEADS throughout to ADD background on US-French relations, French efforts to renew trade with Iraq, quotes from communique and ministry spokeswoman. ADDS byline. No pickup.<

^By JOCELYN NOVECK=

^Associated Press Writer=

PARIS (AP) — France said Friday it won't participate in a new, scaled-back version of the U.S.-led mission to protect Kurds in northern Iraq because humanitarian aid is no longer part of the plan.

The decision was just the latest example of France parting ways with the United States on a diplomatic issue. In recent months France has disagreed with Washington over the next U.N. secretary general, the structure of NATO's southern command, and peacemaking in Africa and the Middle East, among other things.

The air surveillance by the United States, Britain and France, known as Operation Provide Comfort, was launched after a failed 1991 rebellion against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein following his defeat in the Persian Gulf War.

The mission ends Dec. 31. On Wednesday, the Turkish parliament agreed to a six-month extension of the flights, which take off from Turkey.

At the time, the Turkish defense minister said France would no longer participate. But the French insisted no decision had been made.

In a communique released Friday, the Foreign Ministry said Provide Comfort was originally meant to provide humanitarian aid to the Kurds in northern Iraq and "to prevent any action taken against the civilian population of the zone..."

"The humanitarian element initially planned in 'Provide Comfort' does not figure in the new operation," the statement said. "For this reason, France will not participate."

Under Provide Comfort, a military coordination center oversaw the humanitarian operations of private aid agencies in northern Iraq. It was pulled out of the region in September following clashes between Iraqi Kurdish rival groups, and will not be included in the new mission.

In recent months, France has sought to ease U.N. sanctions on Iraq and French companies have been preparing for renewed trade with Baghdad, once a major French trading partner.

France this year also refused to take part in the U.S.-led move to deepen the no-fly zone in southern Iraq, from the 32nd to the 33rd parallel.

A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Anita Limido, stressed Friday at a briefing that the latest French decision "has no effect on our excellent relations" with the United States.

She said discussions with Washington had been "neutral and objective."

In its communique, the government also emphasized Friday that the end of Provide Comfort "doesn't change at all" France's participation in the surveillance in southern Iraq.

And it stressed that the French decision does not affect "the determination of France to call on Iraq to conform to all U.N. Security Council resolutions, an indispensable condition for it to regain its place in the international community."

More than 50 British, French and U.S. warplanes take off from Turkey's southern Incirlik base almost daily for reconnaissance flights over northern Iraq, where the Iraqi Kurds have maintained a de facto autonomous state.

(jn-cb)

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^BC-France-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru

^France won't participate in U.S.-led mission protecting Kurds<

^Eds: Recasts lead to further describe French position; ADDS full quote and background. No pickup.<

PARIS (AP) ÷ France said Friday it will not participate in a new, scaled-back mission to protect Kurds in northern Iraq because the humanitarian part of the original plan ``does not figure'' in the new one.

The air surveillance by the United States, Britain and France, known as Operation Provide Comfort, was launched after a failed 1991 rebellion against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein following his defeat in the Persian Gulf War.

The mission ends on Jan. 1. On Wednesday, the Turkish parliament agreed to a six-month extension of the flights, which take off from Turkey.

At the time, the Turkish defense minister said France would no longer participate. But the French insisted no decision had been made.

In a communique released Friday, the Foreign Ministry said Provide Comfort had been put into place to provide humanitarian aid to the Kurds in northern Iraq and ``to prevent any action taken against the civilian population of the zone...''

``The humanitarian element initially planned in 'Provide Comfort' does not figure in the new operation,'' the statement said.

``For this reason, France will not participate.''

More than 50 British, French and U.S. warplanes take off from Turkey's southern Incirlik base almost daily for reconnaissance flights over northern Iraq, where the Iraqi Kurds have maintained a de facto autonomous state.

Since its inception, the mission has been renewed every six months after rancorous debate in the Turkish parliament.

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^Iraq slams decision to renew U.S.-led mission protecting Kurds<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) ÷ A state-run Iraqi newspaper criticized Turkey's decision to renew the U.S.-led air mission protecting Kurds in northern Iraq.

In an editorial published Thursday, the state-run Al-Thawra newspaper accused Britain and the United States of using ``pressures, threats and bribes'' to get Turkey's approval to continue operating from a Turkish air base.

Turkey's parliament on Wednesday agreed to a six-month extension of the overflights.

``We strongly condemn Turkey's decision renewing the presence of foreign forces on its territories, and we consider this a new plot with the United States and Britain against Iraq,' ' the editorial said.

It called the air surveillance illegal and a violation of Iraq's sovereignty. The Al-Thawra comment was carried on the official Iraqi News Agency, which was monitored in Cairo.

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The air surveillance known as Operation Provide Comfort was launched after the Gulf War to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq following a failed 1991 rebellion against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

While the Turkish government terminated the mandate of the operation, it approved a scaled-back mission to go into effect the day the old one ends, Jan 1.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Turkish troops press on with offensive in northern Iraq<

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AP) _ More Turkish jets crossed into northern Iraq on Thursday to give extra fire power to about 5,000 soldiers hunting for Kurdish rebels, an official said.

At least 74 separatist guerrillas have been killed in the offensive, which began Monday, said an official speaking on condition of anonymity.

Officials did not say how many more jets took part in the fighting. The Anatolia news agency, quoting military officials, reported Turkish jets bombed a suspected rebel camp in Hakurk near the borders of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The report did not give casualty figures.

Turkish troops occasionally go after Turkish Kurdish separatists in northern Iraq, where rebels maintain bases for hit-and-run raids. The rebels have been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984.

The Turkish troops, backed by F-4 jets and helicopter gunships, began the latest incursion after guerrillas attacked an army outpost near the southeastern Turkish town of Silopi.

But a pro-rebel news agency on Thursday denied the guerrillas have suffered heavy losses.

"The rebels are holding their own," a spokeswoman for the Germany-based DEM news agency said. She declined to give her name.

She said that rebels had killed six Turkish soldiers in battles close to the border. The Turkish military said only two soldiers had been killed.

The conflict has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

(sf/bm)

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld<

^Turkish troops press offensive in northern Iraq; 100 killed<

^Eds: LEADS to update rebel death toll to 100<

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AP) _ The Kurdish rebel death toll in northern Iraq reached 100 Thursday as more Turkish jets crossed the border to give extra fire power to soldiers hunting guerrilla bases, the military said.

Around 25 of the guerrillas were killed Thursday, the fourth day of the offensive by about 5,000 soldiers, a military statement said.

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(sf/bm)

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey

^Iraq criticizes Turkish incursion against Kurds<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq has criticized Turkey's latest incursion into the North in search of Kurdish rebels and called for an immediate withdrawal of the Turkish troops, newspapers said Friday.

The papers quoted a statement by Iraq's Foreign Ministry demanding the withdrawal and calling on Turkey ``not to repeat such actions.''

Turkey's latest offensive against Kurdish rebels went into a fifth day Friday. On Thursday, the military dispatched jets to back up its troops and said a total of 100 rebels had been killed.

Iraq has repeatedly criticized Turkish incursions into the North as a violation of its sovereignty.

The area is technically a ``safe haven'' for Kurds to protect them from attack by Iraq's forces. U.S., British and French jets patrolled the skies starting in 1991, when Iraq put down a Kurdish rebellion against Saddam Hussein's rule.

But fighting last year between rival Kurdish rebel factions allowed Saddam to regain control of some northern areas. France recently announced that it would stop participating in air operations.

The Iraqi statement said: ``We have repeated on many occasions to the Turkish officials that the right way to deal with the problem is by direct agreement between the governments of Iraq and Turkey to secure safe borders based on mutual respect for each country's sovereignty.''

It also called for ``keeping foreign influence away from the region.''

Turkey insists it must defend itself against Kurdish rebels it says are operating out of northern Iraq, Syria and Iran. The rebels have been seeking autonomy for Kurds in in southeastern Turkey since 1984.

The conflict has claimed more than 21,000 lives.

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^US told Turkish troops won't stay long in Northern Iraq<

^With Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

WASHINGTON (AP) _ Turkey has given the United States assurance that its offensive into Northern Iraq to hunt down separatist rebels will be of limited duration.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the Turkish action was provoked by attacks by the guerrillas and that Turkey is utilizing a ``hot pursuit'' strategy to go after them.

Turkish officials have also given assurances that the rights of innocent civilians will be respected, Burns said.

Some 100 people were reported killed in a four-day offensive by the Turkish army against Kurdish guerrilla bases in Northern Iraq.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds,226<

^Report: Iraqi Kurdish faction executes four opponents<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) ÷ The Kurdistan Democratic Party has executed four members of a rival faction, charging it had carried out a bomb attack in a KDP-controlled city, the group's radio station reported.

The radio broadcast, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp. in London, said the four were executed Friday.

The radio said the attack occurred in Irbil, the Kurdish provincial capital in northern Iraq which is under control of KDP leader Massoud Barzani.

It said the men, ``detained a few weeks ago,'' had confessed to carrying out the attack under instructions from the leadership of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. There were no further details.

The PUK, led by Jalal Talabani, has been contesting for power with Barzani in the Kurdish-controlled area carved out in northern Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War.

Last August, Barzani's fighters drove Talabani's supporters out of Irbil and surrounding areas with help from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army.

On Friday, the London-headquartered Al-Hayat newspaper reported that Saddam is trying to reconcile with Talabani, saying Saddam sent a former Kurdish Cabinet minister to try to convince Talabani to open a dialogue with Baghdad.

Saddam's move is seen as an attempt to regain control of the region.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds,304<

^Saddam tries to woo second Kurdish leader for reconciliation<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) ÷ Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is trying to re-establish ties with a second Kurdish leader ahead of a U.S.-sponsored meeting to reconcile warring Kurds, a leading Arab newspaper said Friday.

Saddam's move is largely seen as an attempt to regain a full hold on the northern region, which until recently had been a de facto Kurdish state protected by overflights by a U.S.-led allied force.

The London-based Al-Hayat newspaper said Saddam has dispatched a former Kurdish minister in his cabinet to convince Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, to open a dialogue with Baghdad.

Former minister Makram Talabani, who is a cousin of Talabani, met with the Kurdish leader a few days ago to discuss ideas for reconciliation, the newspaper said.

Such an alliance would enhance Saddam's hold on the north since Talabani's chief rival, Massoud Barzani, already has re-established ties with the Iraqi government.

The move came a week before a meeting proposed by the United States between representatives of Talabani's group and Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The Kurdish-controlled area set up after the Gulf War in 1991 was weakened by feuds between Barzani and Talabani over power sharing. Last August, it deteriorated further when Barzani asked Saddam for military help to overcome Talabani's Iranian-allied forces.

Since then, Barzani has been negotiating with Baghdad for an accord which will give the Kurds wider autonomy in the northern enclave ÷ and himself greater power.

But Al-Hayat said the negotiations stalled after Saddam let it be known he does not consider Barzani the sole leader of Iraq's nearly 4 million Kurds. Saddam also urged him to sever ties with the West.

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^Iraqi Kurdish groups to resume peace talks<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups will resume peace talks under U.S. supervision Tuesday to complete an agreement establishing permanent cease-fire lines.

The two groups, one backed by Iran, the other by Iraq, battled each other last fall before the United States brokered a cease-fire in October, which has held for the most part.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau will chair the talks.

Since the Gulf War, Kurdish dominated northern Iraq has been a de-facto state.

(yo)

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraqi Kurdish groups resume peace talks, without leaders<

^By YALMAN ONARAN=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) -- Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups -- one backed by Iran, the other by Iraq -- resumed peace talks under U.S. supervision Tuesday to try to turn a three-month-old cease-fire into a permanent one.

But the absence of their top leaders cast doubts about prospects for the talks' success.

The Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) battled each other for weeks before the United States brokered a cease-fire in October, which has mostly held.

The latest round of talks, expected to last for two days, was scheduled to iron out remaining disagreements on just where each group's fighters can be grouped without antagonizing their rivals.

Turkish foreign ministry announced Monday that PUK leader Jalal Talabani would attend the talks, but there was no indication whether his rival, KDP leader Massoud Barzani intended to come.

In any case, there was no sign of either leader on Tuesday.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, who is co-chairing the talks with the Turkish hosts, said the talks were aimed at establishing "additional confidence-building measures for moving closer to political reconciliation."

But that goal appeared difficult. The lead KDP delegate, Sami Abdurrahman, began his remarks by blaming the PUK for most of the current problems.

Since the Gulf War, Kurdish-dominated northern Iraq has been a de-facto state protected by U.S.-led allied war planes.

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^Iraqi Kurdish groups agree on cease-fire line<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Rival Iraqi Kurdish factions promised Wednesday to withdraw forces along an agreed cease-fire line to consolidate a three-month peace, a senior U.S. official said.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Kurdistan Democratic Party also agreed to the deployment of a peace monitoring force for the cease-fire line, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau told reporters.

''We have made some significant progress and taken a number of steps that will strengthen the cease-fire,'' Pelletreau said. ''We have achieved what we wanted to achieve.''

But the greatest test to reconciliation remains the sharing of much-needed customs revenues obtained from a border gate between Turkey and northern Iraq.

Pelletreau said Turkey, Britain and the United States had urged the rival groups to establish a mechanism to ensure the fair distribution of revenues. ''But this was not a subject all participants were empowered to discuss,'' he said.

The talks are being co-chaired by the United States and Turkey, with Britain also taking part.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani is expected to arrive in Ankara on Thursday for talks with Turkish and U.S. officials expected to center on the sharing of revenues.

The peace force is to consist of minority Iraqi groups including the Turkmen and Assyrians and was expected to be deployed in February, he said.

No details on the demarcation of the cease-fire line was given.

The PUK and KDP have been at odds for years, but battled each other fiercely for weeks in September before a U.S. brokered cease-fire came into effect in October. The cease-fire has mostly been observed despite some reports of violation.

Pelletreau said the factions and the peace monitoring force would investigate the alleged violations. The two sides also agreed to ensure the safe return of people displaced by the fighting.

The West set up a safe area for Kurds in northern Iraq to protect them from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army after a failed 1991 rebellion in which the Iraq-backed KDP and Iran-backed PUK joined forces. But the two groups have mostly quarreled with each other since then.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Kurdish leader hopeful for elections in northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Iraq (AP) _ With peace talks between rival Iraqi Kurdish groups making little headway, the leader of one of the factions expressed hope Friday that elections would be held in northern Iraq before the end of the year.

The two groups ended months of fighting in October after a U.S.-brokered cease-fire. But reconciliation has been slow. After four months of negotiations, the rival groups could only agree earlier this week on a cease-fire line.

The region had been protected by a U.S.-led air force since after the Gulf War and is out of the control of Saddam Hussein.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, has ruled out the equal sharing of power with his rival. But he favored a broad-based government in which all minority groups of the region would be represented.

"The fifty-fifty arrangement was not successful," Talabani told reporters. "The party which has the majority should form a coalition with representatives of all other groups."

Talabani arrived in Turkey Thursday for talks with Turkish officials on the peace talks and other issues.

Talabani's group and rival Kurdistan Democratic Party have promised to withdraw forces from positions along the cease-fire line.

But the greatest test to peace still remains the sharing of much-needed customs revenues from the border gate between Turkey and northern Iraq and establishing enough trust to re-establish a joint regional administration.

The two groups shared power after the West set up a safe area for Kurds in northern Iraq in 1991. But they have been quarreling with each other since then.

(sf/bm)

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Refugee Camp<

^U.N. to withdraw from refugee camp in northern Iraq<

^By SELCAN HACAOGLU=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — The United Nations will withdraw from a refugee camp where some 14,000 Turkish Kurdish refugees who fled northern Iraq from Turkish-Kurdish battling three years ago have been sheltered, a U.N. official said Monday.

“But we’re not leaving the refugees,” Metin Corabatir, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said. “We are leaving it because our work there was being prevented by some activists.”

Corabatir was apparently referring to Turkish Kurdish guerrillas. The Turkish government says guerrillas have taken control in the Atrush camp, which is 72 kilometers (45 miles) from the Turkish border.

The United Nations plans to pull out from the camp Tuesday.

“We’re expecting the return of our citizens as soon as possible,” Sermet Atacanli, a foreign ministry spokesman, said.

Only 400 refugees have returned to Turkey so far following Turkey’s announcement two months ago that they will not be subjected to any legal action.

Turkey pledges to feed, accommodate and financially support each returnee until they resettle. If needed, families will also be provided with construction materials to repair their homes.

Corabatir said the returns must be voluntary.

“We will guide them to two temporary U.N. camps where they will make their decisions,” Corabatir said.

He said the new camps will be 30 kilometers (18 miles) south of the Turkish border at Mukibla and Balkus in the northern Iraqi province of Dohuk.

“If they decide to stay, we will continue to help them,” Corabatir said. “But new camps will not be permanent.”

Corabatir said around a thousand activists, living in Atrush, already left for mountains along the Turkish border. The camp’s residents were mostly old men, women and children younger than 14.

The guerrillas have been fighting for autonomy in Turkey’s southeast. The conflict has claimed 21,000 lives since 1984.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurdistan

^Iraq pulls two brigades out of Kurdistan<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Iraq has pulled two brigades of troops out of the North, where it has maintained a military presence since August when it intervened in Kurdish in-fighting, the Iraqi Broadcasting Corp. reported Friday.

The withdrawals of the 39th and 116th brigades began Wednesday from the districts of Bustanah and Qushtebah, which lie between the towns of Irbil and Sulaymaniyah.

''A withdrawal of this size is a sort of change of policy by the regime,'' said a statement from the broadcasting corporation, which was faxed to The Associated Press.

The withdrawal left behind the 7th infantry and 1st armored division, the statement said.

The United States, Britain and France set up a ''safe haven'' for Kurds in the North after a failed rebellion by the Kurds against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in 1991.

Saddam sent his forces into the North last August to intervene on behalf of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Massoud Barzani, which was fighting with the rival Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, headed by Jalal Talabani. A U.S.-brokered cease-fire ended the fighting last October.

Saddam defended his move by saying Iranian troops had crossed the border in support of the PUK.

Talabani's forces currently control the area around Sulaymaniyah while Barzani's men are in control of Irbil and surrounding areas.

Although the United States and Britain still patrol a ''no fly'' zone over the North, the allies have given up trying to maintain order on the ground.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq<

^Kurdish official attacked in northern Iraq, bodyguards killed<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) ÷ Gunmen opened fire on the governor of northern Iraq's main Kurdish city, missing their target but killing two of his bodyguards, the Anatolia news agency said Monday.

``My car was raked by automatic gunfire minutes after I got in,'' said Francois Hariri, the governor of Irbil, Anatolia reported.

The news agency said two of his bodyguards were shot to death as they pursued the gunmen. The attack took place Sunday, it said.

Hariri blamed the attack on the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Hariri represents the Iraqi-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The Patriotic Union representative in Ankara denied his charge as ``baseless.''

Hariri's party drove the Patriotic Union from Irbil and the surrounding area last summer with the help of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army. A U.S.-brokered cease-fire took effect in October, and has largely held.

The United States and Britain have been patrolling a ``no fly'' zone over northern Iraq to protect the Kurds from attacks by Iraq since the Gulf War, but they have given up trying to maintain order on the ground.

(sh/cph/djw)

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BC-Turkey-Iraq Kurdish official atta

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^BC-UN-Iraq-Refugees

^Refugees in northern Iraq resettle near Iraqi controlled area(

GENEVA (AP) — More than a thousand Kurdish refugees have left a former Atrush refugee camp in northern Iraq and settled near the Iraqi controlled area of the country, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said Tuesday.

“Some 1,300 refugees have settled in Ain Sufni,” said UNHCR spokesman Kris Janowski.

The refugee agency had delivered food, water, medicine and additional tents and kerosene to the refugees,” he said.

UNHCR shut down the Atrush camp in January after it admitted the camp was being controlled by guerrillas.

It was home to about 14,000 Turkish Kurds who fled fighting in Turkey in 1994.

The Turkish government says the camp served as a base for Kurdish guerrillas fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey. Turkey promised to feed, accommodate and financially support the refugees until they resettle.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Kurdish group says official murdered, withdraws from talks<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group reported Tuesday that one of its leading members was assassinated in northern Iraq and withdrew from peace talks demanding an investigation.

The murdered official was a regional head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Mouhiddin Rahim; said the KDP representative here, Sami Abdurrahman.

Abdurrahman said there were no details of how Rahim was killed. Rahim used to be the KDP representative in Washington in the late 1970's.

The spokesman said "all preliminary indications" point to the KDP's rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The PUK denied responsibility for the slaying.

"They are creating pretexts to spoil the peace process," Shaza Saib, a PUK spokesman here said.

The two groups were meeting in Ankara Tuesday to discuss ways to enhance a cease-fire in the region, which has held since last October.

"We strongly criticize the mediators _ the United States, Britain and Turkey _ for not carrying out investigations into recent terrorist attacks against our officials," Abdurrahman said. "We will not attend any other meetings of this sort until a thorough investigation is carried out by mediators."

The governor of Irbil, also from the KDP, escaped an assassination attempt unharmed last month, but his two bodyguards were killed. Irbil is a northern Iraqi town under Kurdish control.

Turkey, the United States and Britain have been mediating between the groups since October after the year-long hostilities ended.

However recent unconfirmed reports have indicated skirmishes between the PUK and KDP along the buffer line that separates their forces.

A de-facto Kurdish state was formed in northern Iraq after the Gulf War, protected by U.S. and British war planes.

(yo/djw)

AP-LD-03-11-97 1527GMT<

ank 233 87 intw cai

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraqi Kurdish group won't attend talks<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group, while pledging to work for peace with rivals in northern Iraq, said Wednesday it would boycott any top-level meetings until the slaying of one of leading members is investigated.

Last week, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, withdrew from peace talks after accusing its rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK, of being behind the killing of one of its officials, Mouhiddin Rahim.

The PUK has denied any involvement in the killing.

"Such meetings have no significance while terrorist attacks are carried out by the other side against us for which we have abundant evidence," said a statement by the KDP faxed to The Associated Press in Ankara.

But the KDP pledged to abide by measures mediated by Turkey, the United States and Britain since October, including the deployment of a peace-monitoring force.

The two groups had been meeting in Ankara to discuss ways to build on a cease-fire in the region when news of the assassination came.

A de-facto Kurdish state was formed in northern Iraq after the Gulf War, protected by U.S. and British war planes.

(sf-fd)

AP-LD-03-19-97 1032GMT<

w2093-----

r i BC-US-Kurds 03-28 0138

233 87 ank cai

^BC-US-Kurds

^Rival Kurdish leaders meet with U.S. officials<

WASHINGTON (AP) _ Officials of rival Iraqi Kurd groups held separate meetings with U.S. officials and reaffirmed their commitment to seek an accommodation, the State Department said Friday.

Spokesman John Dinger said the two sides also stressed the importance of forward movement in the peace process.

The officials of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan met separately on Thursday with David Welch, a top official of the State Department's Middle East bureau.

Welch stressed the importance of progress and called on both sides to implement all outstanding confidence building measures, Dinger said.

The discussions focussed on the political, economic and humanitarian situation in Northern Iraq.

AP-LD-03-28-97 2059GMT<

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u i BC-Turkey-Iraq

04-02 0187

ank 233 87 intw cai

^BC-Turkey-Iraq<

^U.S. delegation tries to bring sides together in northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Trying to help rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq reconcile their differences, a U.S. delegation will leave for the region shortly, a foreign ministry official said Wednesday.

The delegation is being led by David Welch, a top official of the State Department's Middle East bureau, said the Turkish foreign ministry spokesman Omer Akbel.

Citing security concerns, neither Akbel nor U.S. Embassy officials would say just when the Americans would meet with the Kurdish leaders.

Officials from the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan met separately with Welch last week in Washington.

The two groups had been meeting in Ankara to discuss ways to build on an October cease-fire, but the talks were stalled by the murder of a top KDP official.

The delegation will stop in Ankara for consultations with Turkish officials on its return, Akbel said.

In August, the KDP drove the PUK out of portions of northern Iraq with help from Iraq.

(sf)

AP-LD-04-02-97 1450GMT<

RMG1174-----

u i BC-Turkey-Iraq

04-03 0151

ank 233 87 intw cai

^BC-Turkey-Iraq<

^U.S. delegation heads for Kurdish region<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A U.S. delegation headed for northern Iraq Thursday in a bid to help rival Kurdish factions iron out their differences.

The Anatolia news agency said the delegation left from Ankara, where faction representatives had been discussing ways to build on a cease-fire signed in October.

It is led by David Welch, a State Department official who specializes in Middle Eastern affairs. Welch met last week in Washington with officials of both groups _ the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party drove the Patriotic Union out of parts of northern Iraq with the help of Iraqi troops last August. The two sides signed a cease-fire in October, but the subsequent talks in Ankara were stalled by the murder of a top KDP official.

(sf/cph)

AP-LD-04-03-97 1054GMT<

U.S. delegation tries to bring sides together in northern Iraq

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Trying to help rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq reconcile their differences, a U.S. delegation will leave for the region shortly, a foreign ministry official said Wednesday.

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(sf)

021450 Apr GMT

[georgia]

AP VVV90 Aa ----- US-Kurds

04-03 11:08p

US officials hold talks with Kurdish leaders

WASHINGTON (AP) - U.S. officials held talks Thursday in Northern Iraq with leaders of several Iraqi Kurdish factions, the State Department announced.

The talks were conducted by two State Department experts in the region, David Welch and Bob Deutsch. They met with representatives from the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Iraqi Turkuman Front, and the Assyrian Democratic Movement.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the discussions focussed on the Ankara peace process that was put in place by the United States, Turkey, and the United Kingdom last autumn.

"The United States continues to believe that reconciliation and stability in northern Iraq are in the best interests of all the inhabitants of northern Iraq," Burns said.

Welch met last week in Washington with KDP and PUK officials. The two sides signed a cease-fire in October, but the subsequent talks in Ankara were stalled by the murder of a top KDP official.

032008 Apr GMT

[Turkey]

AP VVV90 Aa ----- Iraq-US-Visit,0283

. 04-04 1:03a

Baghdad condemns U.S. official visit to northern Iraq

Eds: INCORPORATES Turkey-Iraq.

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Iraq Thursday said a visit to its Kurdish north by a senior U.S. official was tantamount to an act of aggression and interference in its internal affairs.

A foreign ministry spokesman, quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency, said the State Department's David Welch "entered northern Iraq illegally under the pretext of mediating to end fighting between Kurdish factions."

"This behavior falls within the continued acts of aggression and interference in Iraq's internal affairs," the unnamed spokesman said.

Welch visited northern Iraq several times during the past year to reconcile the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which are vying for power in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Welch, who negotiated a cease-fire between the two factions in October, left Ankara earlier Thursday for northern Iraq to meet representatives from the two parties to cement the truce and iron out other differences.

The two parties took control of northern Iraq shortly after the end of the 1991 Gulf War under military protection provided by war allies the United States, Britain and France.

Baghdad accuses Washington of pressuring the two parties to stay outside the central government's control as part of what it sees as a conspiracy against President Saddam Hussein's regime.

With the help Saddam's army, the Kurdistan Democratic Party drove the Patriotic Union out of parts of northern Iraq in August. A U.S.-brokered cease-fire signed in October has generally been observed.

032202 Apr GMT

ank 233 87 intw

^BC-Turkey-Iraq<

^Turkish minister calls for lifting of sanctions on Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) -- State Minister Ahmet Cemil Tunc, returning Friday from Iraq, called for the lifting of United Nations sanctions he said had devastated the Iraqi population.

"Weapons and other items of strategic importance should not be given, but nobody has the right to throw women, children and the old into poverty because of a mistake," Tunc told reporters at the end of a four-day visit.

Iraq has been barred from unrestricted oil exports since 1990, when the Security Council imposed economic sanctions after its invasion of Kuwait. The council has refused to lift the sanctions until it is satisfied Iraq has scrapped its advanced weapons programs.

For humanitarian reasons, the United Nations has allowed Iraq to sell up to dlr 2 billion worth of oil for an initial six-month period to buy food and medicine. The first food shipment arrived last month from Turkey.

Turkey also complains of hardship -- it estimates it has lost dlr 27 billion in trade and from the closure of the pipeline.

(sf-fd)

AP-LD-04-04-97 1636GMT<

u i BC-Iraq-US-Visit 04-03 0330

intj 888 nat cai ank wdc

^BC-Iraq-US-Visit<

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^Eds: INCORPORATES Turkey-Iraq.<

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Baghdad accuses Washington of pressuring the two parties to stay outside the central government's control as part of what it sees as a conspiracy against President Saddam Hussein's regime.

``The experience of the past years has proved beyond any doubt that the deployment of the so-called air surveillance force in Turkey is but a cover to continue hatching conspiracies against Iraq and threatening its national unity,''' said the unnamed spokesman quoted by the Iraqi news agency.

With the help Saddam's army, the Kurdistan Democratic Party drove the Patriotic Union out of parts of northern Iraq in August. A U.S.-brokered cease-fire signed in October has generally been observed.

^WF-MY-HH<

AP-LD-04-03-97 2057GMT<

RME4103-----

u i BC-Iraq-US-Visit

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^BC-Iraq-US-Visit<

^Kurdish faction agrees to release captives after U.S. visit<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group on Friday agreed to release captives from a rival faction in northern Iraq, apparently after being persuaded by a visiting U.S. delegation.

Massoud Barzani, leader of Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, made the announcement after he met with two U.S. State Department officials, David Welch and Bob Deutsch, on Thursday, a statement said.

The State Department announced Thursday that the discussions focused on the Ankara peace process that was put in place by the United States, Turkey, and Britain last autumn.

The release of the detainees, who belonged to a rival Kurdish group, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, was planned to start soon, the statement said.

Shazad Saib, a PUK representative here, said on Thursday that each side was holding more than 100 detainees. The two sides fought for several months last year to gain power in northern Iraq.

Iraqi Kurds maintain a de-facto autonomous state in northern Iraq under the protection of a U.S.-led allied mission.

On Thursday, Iraq branded the U.S. delegation's visit as an act of aggression and interference in its internal affairs.

(sh-fd)

AP-LD-04-04-97 1248GMT<

233 87 ank cai

^BC-US-Kurds

^US mediators arrange for talks between rival Kurdish factions<

^By SLOBODAN LEKIC=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ In an effort to end the conflict between Kurdish factions in northern Iraq, U.S. mediators have arranged for a meeting this month between the rival groups, a State Department official said Friday.

"The United States believes that this peace process is in the best interests of all the people of northern Iraq," said department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

He said Acting Assistant Secretary of State David Walsh and Bob Deutsch, the department's regional office director, held talks Thursday and Friday with leaders of the principal factions in the area.

These included Massoud Barzani, head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party which has maintained sporadic ties with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and Jalal Talabani of the Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

"All sides agreed on the need for early and rapid preparation for a next high-level meeting in Ankara in the ... next couple of weeks," Burns said.

"I can't predict who will attend that meeting on behalf of the KDP and PUK, but obviously, we'd like to move this process forward so that someday Mr. Barzani and Mr. Talabani decide to sit down together in the interest of stability in northern Iraq," he said.

Iraq on Thursday branded the diplomats' visit as an act of aggression and interference in its affairs.

Baghdad accuses Washington of pressuring the two parties to stay outside of the central government's control as part of what it sees as a conspiracy against Saddam Hussein's regime.

With the help of Iraq's army, the KDP drove the PUK out of portions of northern Iraq in August.

The two sides signed a U.S.-brokered cease-fire in October. But the subsequent talks in Ankara were stalled by the murder of a top KDP official.

The United States, Turkey, and Britain have been mediating between the groups since the yearlong hostilities ended.

Burns said the visit by Walsh and Deutsch _ the two most senior American officials to tour the region in years _ demonstrated that "the United States is fundamentally committed to safeguard the rights of the people" of Northern Iraq.

A de-facto Kurdish state was formed in northern Iraq after the Gulf War, protected by U.S., British and French war planes.

AP-LD-04-04-97 2205GMT<

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u i EC-Iraq-Kurds 04-15 0177

intj 000 nat cai 02 ank

^EC-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraqi Kurdish factions exchange prisoners<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ The two main Kurdish factions in northern Iraq exchanged more than 130 prisoners, who were taken during fighting last year, one of the factions said Tuesday.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said it released 71 prisoners, while the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan released 61. The exchange took place Monday near Kuysanjaq, 180 kilometers (112 miles) north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, the statement said.

Earlier this month, two senior U.S. officials held talks in northern Iraq with Kurdish leaders to try to mediate a settlement.

The KDP, with the help of Iraq's army, drove the PUK out of portions of northern Iraq in August.

The two sides signed a U.S.-brokered cease-fire in October. But the subsequent talks in Ankara, Turkey, have stalled.

The two parties took control of northern Iraq shortly after the end of the 1991 Gulf War under military protection provided by war allies the United States, Britain and France.

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backstoppingly: the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said Friday in Geneva that the last group of Kurdish refugees from Turkey left the Atroush camp on Wednesday.

UNHCR spokeswoman Pam O'Toole said that of the nearly 11,000 refugees, some 4,311 have settled locally in northern Iraq; 6,439 are at Ain Sufni awaiting permission to enter Iraqi government-controlled territory; and the remaining 115 people have gone back to Turkey.

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AP-LD-04-18-97 1229GMT<

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r i BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds

04-26 0226

233 87 ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds,0229<

^Turkish tanks cross into northern Iraq to hit Kurdish rebel
hideouts<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Some 130 Turkish tanks crossed into northern Iraq for a major spring offensive against Turkish Kurdish rebels, a Kurdish daily said Saturday.

Kurdish guerrillas, fighting for autonomy within Turkey, use bases in northern Iraq to stage hit-and-run attacks.

The tanks crossed the border Thursday to secure roads for troops to use, the daily Demokراسi said.

Several other major dailies reported the troop deployment but there was no official confirmation of a cross-border raid.

Daily Turkiye said the number of the troops transferred to the border is expected to reach 25,000 by Sunday.

In recent springs, Turkey has used the warmer weather to launch offensives against the rebels in northern Iraq, where Baghdad lacks authority.

Iraqi Kurds established a de facto state in northern Iraq in the wake of the Gulf War in 1991.

In 1995, Turkey sent 35,000 troops into Iraq, but the six-week incursion was not successful because the rebels had received prior warning of the offensive. The operation also drew heavy criticism from Western allies.

The conflict has claimed some 23,000 lives since guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party began fighting in Turkey's southeast region in 1984.

AP-LD-04-26-97 0917GMT<

RME4369-----

u i BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds 1stLd-Writethru 04-26 0310

ank 233 87 intw

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru<

^Turkish tanks cross into northern Iraq to hit Kurdish rebel hideouts<

^Eds: UPDATES with 30 Kurdish rebels killed in action inside Turkey<

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Several other major dailies reported the troop deployment but there was no official confirmation of a cross-border raid.

And an Iraqi Kurdish group, controlling the border area, said it was not aware of an offensive.

"We did not hear anything so far," Safeen Dizayhee, representative of Kurdistan Democratic Party, said in Ankara.

In action inside Turkey, troops killed 30 Kurdish insurgents in the southeastern provinces of Diyarbakir and Siirt on Saturday, the regional governor's office said.

Reporting on the cross-border offensive, the daily Turkiye said the number of the troops transferred to the border is expected to reach 25,000 by Sunday.

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(sh-fd)

AP-LD-04-26-97 1134GMT<

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u i BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds 2ndLd 04-26 0157

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld<

^Turkish tanks cross into northern Iraq to hit Kurdish rebel
hideouts<

^EDS: UPDATES with military denying offensive but confirming troops
movement,<

^AP Graphics<

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to use, the daily Demokrasi said.

Several other major dailies reported the troop deployment along
Iraqi-Turkish border.

The office of general staff denied an offensive was afoot
although it confirmed troop movements which it said were aimed at
"countering Kurdish rebel infiltrations," the Anatolia news agency
reported.

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AP-LD-04-26-97 1420GMT<

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^BC-Turkey-Immigrants<

^17 Iraqis drown trying to sneak into Greece<

KUSADASI, Turkey (AP) - Seventeen Iraqis drowned while trying to make the passage from this coastal resort into Greece, the Anatolia news agency reported Sunday.

Four others were missing and feared drowned, it said.

One survivor who managed to swim ashore said a total of 22 Iraqis in two boats were crossing the sea to the Greek island of Samos, about 15 kilometers (9 miles) off the Turkish coast.

The first boat sank and its passengers caused the second boat to capsize while struggling to come aboard.

Last week, the bodies of five Iranians who also drowned while trying to reach Greece washed ashore near Kusadasi, which lies some 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the Aegean port city of Izmir.

Eight Iraqis drowned in March during a similar attempt.

Thousands of illegal immigrants, most of them Kurds, Iraqis and Iranians, pay about dlr 2,000 each to Turkish smugglers to take them to the Greek islands near the Turkish coast.

(sf/djw)

AP-LD-05-04-97 1421GMT<

Talabani: Egypt pressing for Iraqi Kurdish reconciliation

By SALAH NASRAWI

Associated Press Writer

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - Egypt is pressing rival Iraqi Kurdish factions to reconcile their differences to prevent a possible disintegration of Iraq, a top Kurdish leader and Egyptian officials said Wednesday.

Egypt's involvement in the volatile area is almost certain to anger Iraq and raise suspicions in Turkey and Iran, which have been fighting their own Kurdish insurgents.

"Our brothers in Egypt want to help us closing the Kurdish ranks," said Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. "We welcome that and believe it's a sincere and genuine effort," he told The Associated Press.

Egypt is backing U.S. efforts to arrange a meeting between the leaders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and its main rival, the Kurdish Democratic Party, to discuss ways of ending their conflict, according to the Egyptian officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The two factions have generally observed a U.S.-brokered cease-fire reached in October but the United States wants them to resolve their differences to head off future armed conflict. A U.S.-sponsored meeting between the factions' leaderships was expected later this month in Ankara, the Turkish capital.

Such meetings between Iraqi Kurdish leaders have in the past met with limited success.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Moussa received Talabani in Cairo on Sunday and said Egypt will maintain contacts with Iraqi Kurdish groups "to express Egypt's support for Iraq's unity."

Many Arab nations, including Egypt, fear that renewed conflict between the Kurdish factions could lead to intervention in the area by neighboring Turkey and Iran and the eventual dismantling of Iraq.

Talabani said he assured Egyptian officials that his group was fighting for autonomy within Iraq and not independence.

The rival Kurdish groups set up a de-facto Kurdish state in northern Iraq in a safe haven created by the United States and its allies after the 1991 Gulf War.

Western protection of the area followed an ill-fated, anti-government uprising by the Kurds, bringing about a rare display of unity among Kurdish factions. The revolt was ruthlessly crushed by President Saddam Hussein's army.

Fighters loyal to the two groups, however, have clashed repeatedly since. In August, Saddam sent troops to help KDP fighters drive the PUK from Irbil, the Kurdish provincial capital. Large-scale clashes resumed a month later when the PUK launched a counter offensive, reportedly with the help of Iran.

Talabani's visit to Egypt comes one month after a KDP delegation held talks with Egyptian officials.

Talabani said any reconciliation will remain a "far reaching hope" unless key issues such as the division of customs duties, Iraqi Kurdistan's main source of income, are resolved.

The duties are mostly collected from Turkish truckers taking food and other consumer items to sell in sanctions-hit Iraq and taking cheap Iraqi fuel to sell in Turkey.

Talabani accuses the KDP of refusing to hand over almost dlrs 300 million in annual levies to the enclave's Kurdish administration.

sn-lm-hh

[Tashkent]

AP VVV53 Aa ----- Iraq-Iran

05-06 7:37p

Iran blasted for mediating between Iraqi Kurds

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Iraq criticized Iran on Tuesday for mediating between two rival Iraqi Kurdish factions, saying that the Persian state was interfering in its internal affairs.

The Iranian-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan announced a cease-fire on April 30 at the conclusion of peace talks in the Iranian capital, Tehran. The two sides clashed earlier in northern Iraq.

"Iraq strongly condemns these hostile practices, and asks the Iranian government to stop these indirect methods," the official Iraqi News Agency quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying.

The unnamed spokesman said that Tehran wanted to "achieve dubious objectives against the country's security and integrity." Iran's acts, he added, were similar to "dubious foreign schemes bent on maintaining the abnormal situation in northern Iraq."

The United States, Britain and France set up a "safe haven" for Kurds in northern Iraq after a 1991 Kurdish rebellion was ruthlessly crushed by President Saddam Hussein's army.

Iran and Iraq fought a 1980-88 war which left about one million people either killed or wounded from both sides. The war ended by a U.N.-brokered cease-fire but the two Muslim neighbors never signed a peace treaty.

WF-BM-HH

061638 May GMT

02 888 ank rom

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Peace Talks<,0270<

^Iraqi Kurdish factions to reduce forces along cease-fire line<

^With Turkey-Iraq-Kurds?

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ In another step to end the conflict between them, two Iraqi Kurdish factions agreed Wednesday to reduce forces on or close to a cease-fire line in northern Iraq.

The sides will withdraw their forces at least five kilometers (three miles) from the cease-fire line before July 15, a senior U.S. official said.

“At that time all heavy weapons within that zone will be deployed in weapon cantonments,” David Welch, acting assistant secretary of state, told reporters after meeting with representatives of the Iraqi Kurdish groups here.

The factions are the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, which has maintained sporadic ties with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, and the Iran-backed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK.

With the help of the Iraqi army, the KDP drove the PUK out of portions of northern Iraq in August.

The two sides agreed to a U.S.-brokered cease-fire in October. The United States, Turkey, and Britain have been mediating between the groups since groups since then to try and strengthen the cease-fire.

“All participants reaffirmed their commitment to the consolidation of the cease-fire,” said Welch.

He said discussions on the sharing of lucrative border revenues would be taken up during the next meeting to be held in the main Iraqi Kurdish city of Irbil on May 30.

A de-facto Kurdish state was formed in northern Iraq after the Gulf War, protected by U.S., British and French war planes.

AP-LD-05-14-97 2108GMT<

[Tashkent]

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05-06 7:37p

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WF-BM-HH

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AP-LD-05-14-97 2108GMT<

Iranian-backed Kurdish group proposes truce to rivals

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) - A Kurdish group backed by Iran has proposed an agreement to share control over northern Iraq as a way of ending years of differences with its Kurdish rival.

The Kurdistan Democratic Alliance, a coalition of Kurdish parties in northern Iraq led by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, called the draft on Monday "a step on the road of peace ... and aimed at normalizing relations" between the two rival factions.

The PUK, which is led by Jalal Talabani, and the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party have controlled northern Iraq since shortly after the 1991 Gulf War with backing of the United States, Britain and France. But the two have fought bitterly, and Iran and Iraq have both supported their own faction in the struggle.

Under the agreement, the two factions would turn over control to a committee of representatives from all Kurdish parties.

The committee would then appoint a group to scrutinize revenue from customs levied at the border - a point of contention between the two factions - and oversee other finances.

A temporary parliament representing the PUK, KDP and other ethnic groups in northern Iraq would be formed and chaired by an independent candidate agreed to by all parties. The parliament would then elect a "unity government," whose main mission would be to organize elections in less than a year.

There was no immediate word from the KDP on the proposal.

The United States, Britain and France set up an enclave for Kurds in northern Iraq after their rebellion against Iraq failed soon after the 1991 Gulf War. Their autonomy has angered Iraq, which has sought to re-exert his influence over the Kurdish enclave.

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AP VVV11 Aa ----- Kurds-Peace,0196

07-01 5:14a

Kurdish group rejects rival's peace proposal

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - A powerful Kurdish group has rejected a rival faction's peace plan that would lead to shared control of northern Iraq.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party on Monday rejected the plan proposed earlier this month by a coalition of Kurdish parties led by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

"The project is not a peace initiative ... but it is a cover to escalate the aggressive acts practiced by the PUK for some time," the KDP said in a statement.

The PUK and KDP have controlled northern Iraq since shortly after the 1991 Gulf War with backing of the United States, Britain and France. But the two have fought bitterly. Iran has supported the PUK while Iraq has helped the KDP.

The proposed peace plan calls for forming a temporary parliament that would elect a unity government.

The United States, Britain and France established a protected area for Kurds in northern Iraq after Baghdad crushed a Kurdish rebellion following the 1992 Gulf War. Their autonomy has angered Iraq, which has sought to exert its influence over the Kurdish enclave.

010215 jul 97

[baghdad]

161933 jul 97

[turkey]

AP VVV89 Aa ----- Kurds-Fighting

07-16 10:34p

Fighting erupts between Kurd rivals in northern Iraq

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - Kurdish fighters attacked bases of a rival faction in northern Iraq, killing two guerrillas and threatening to end a two-month cease-fire, one of the factions said Wednesday.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said 14 of its fighters were wounded in the fighting that erupted Tuesday night. It inflicted "huge casualties" on the attackers, the statement said.

The rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan denied the report and accused the KDP of trying to end the truce.

The two factions had agreed to the cease-fire in April and promised to begin negotiations for a final settlement to end fighting that started last year after Saddam Hussein's troops helped the KDP expel its rivals from a key city in northern Iraq.

Both the PUK and the KDP share control of the autonomous Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq and have been fighting attempts by Baghdad to again exert its authority over the area.

The United States, Britain and France established the protected area for the Kurds in northern Iraq after Baghdad crushed a Kurdish rebellion following the 1992 Gulf War. But infighting has hampered their efforts to win more political and economic autonomy.

The KDP said the attack, which continued Wednesday, meant an end to the cease-fire and the chance for further negotiations.

Guerrillas from the Turkish Kurdish Workers Party, which uses neighboring northern Iraq as a base, also participated in the attack, it said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press.

But Adnan al-Mufti, a spokesman for the PUK, denied there was any fighting. He accused the KDP of trying to end the truce.

"We hope that the KDP is not trying to back off and abandon its commitments to continue the cease-fire," al-Mufti said.

sn-as

161935 jul 97

[Turkey]

AP VVV52 Aa ----- Iraq-Kurds

07-29 10:51p

Turkish Kurdish rebels reported capturing rival bases

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - Turkish rebel Kurds have captured four key bases of the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party in northern Iraq, Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency reported Tuesday.

The agency, monitored in Cairo, quoted the radio of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, a rival Iraqi Kurdish group, as saying KDP forces suffered "heavy casualties and damages" in the fighting.

It did not say when the alleged clashes took place nor give a location for the bases.

There was no independent confirmation of the report.

Massoud Barzani's KDP fought along Turkish troops in their six-week operation in northern Iraq that began in May in pursuit of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebels.

The KDP accuses PUK, a pro-Iranian group led by Jalal Talabani, of sheltering PKK forces in northern Iraq.

The Turkish army has claimed victory over the PKK rebels in its cross-border operation and said the PKK had pulled out most of its forces from northern Iraq.

my-sf

291953 jul 97

[Turkish]

VVV52 Aa ----- Iraq-Ration, 1st Lead

07-29 11:24p

Kurdish leader holds talks with U.S. officials

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - An Iraqi Kurdish leader has discussed with senior U.S. officials ways to end fighting between rival Kurdish groups and the opposition's attempts to topple Saddam Hussein's government, his group said Wednesday.

A statement faxed to the Associated Press by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said Jalal Talabani met Tuesday with Samuel Burger, President Clinton's chief National Security Advisor and other senior officials at the White House.

It is the first high level meeting between a Kurdish leader and administration officials since fighting erupted between the PUK and its main rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, more than a year ago.

Top on their agenda was efforts to bring about "a durable peace" to Iraq's northern Kurdish enclave which is controlled by the PUK and Massoud Barzani's KDP, the statement said.

The KDP drove PUK forces out of parts of northern Iraq last August with the help of the Iraqi army.

The two sides agreed to a U.S.-brokered cease-fire in October. The United States, Turkey, and Britain have been mediating between the two groups to try to strengthen the truce.

Talabani, who is in Washington on the invitation of the State Department, was reportedly assured by the U.S. officials of Washington's support for his group.

"Mr. Burger reaffirmed U.S. commitment to work with a new government in Iraq that will respect the rights of its citizens and its international obligations," the statement said.

Talabani met earlier with Strobe Talbot, Deputy Secretary of State, and defense officials, the statement added.

Talabani's discussions in Washington coincided with a visit to the United States by Ahmed Chalabi, leader of the U.S.-backed Iraqi National Congress - an umbrella group for Iraqi dissidents trying to remove Saddam from power.

Qader Haj Ali, a spokesman for the PUK in London, told the Associated Press that "the meetings will have a very important impact on the (Iraqi) opposition activities to bring Saddam down." He did not elaborate.

sn-sf

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^U.S. to help Iraqi Kurds(

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The United States will provide dlr\$ 4 million for humanitarian relief projects in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, the State Department said Friday.

Spokesman Jim Foley said the funds are intended to ameliorate the ``exceptionally difficult'' humanitarian problems in the Sulaymaniyah area.

The contribution will complement other relief efforts by the United States, Great Britain, the European Union, the Turkish Red Crescent and non-governmental organizations.

AP-LD-08-01-97 2208GMT(

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurdish leader meets Turkish foreign minister(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish leader assured Turkish authorities on Thursday that his group would prevent activity in northern Iraq of Turkish Kurdish rebels, who are fighting for autonomy within Turkey.

''It was a cordial and friendly meeting,'' Jalal Talabani, leader of the Iraqi Kurdish faction Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK, told reporters after his meeting with Foreign Minister Ismail Cem. ''We discussed everything.''

Turkey has been uneasy over alleged reports that Talabani's forces secretly collaborated with Turkish Kurdish rebels.

Onur Oymen, foreign undersecretary, said Talabani expressed his group's determination to stop terrorism in their region, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Kurdistan Democratic Party, another Iraqi group which fought alongside Turkish troops against the rebels in May and June, has accused the rival PUK recently of attacking its positions in alliance with Turkish Kurdish rebels.

Talabani last month held talks with U.S. officials in Washington about ways of bringing a durable peace in northern Iraq.

Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, drove the PUK out of portions of northern Iraq in August, 1996.

The two sides agreed to a U.S.-brokered cease-fire in October last year. The United States, Turkey, and Britain have been mediating between the two groups to try to strengthen the truce.

A de-facto Kurdish state was formed in northern Iraq after the Gulf War, protected by U.S., British and French war planes.

Meanwhile, in clashes between Turkish troops and Kurdish rebels inside Turkey on Thursday, 29 Kurdish rebels and five soldiers were killed as authorities stepped up security in the southeast on the eve of the anniversary of the day the rebels launched their first attack 13 years ago.

(sh-sf-fd)

AP-LD-08-14-97 1404GMT(

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u i BC-Iraq-Kurds 08-28 0234

cai ank 888 nat intj 02

^BC-Iraq-Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurds battle Turkish guerrillas(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said Thursday that its fighters have attacked bases used by Turkish rebels, forcing the guerrillas from areas near the Turkish and Iranian borders.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said its fighters attacked bases Wednesday night used by Turkish Kurdish rebels. The statement gave no casualty figures and said the Turkish Kurds fled across the nearby Iranian border.

In May, tens of thousands of Turkish troops crossed into northern Iraq to destroy bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is battling the Turkish government. Turkey withdrew its forces in June and has pressed Kurdish groups to stop the PKK from carrying out cross-border attacks.

The KDP statement said its fighters fought the PKK for more than 12 hours late Tuesday night and forced the group's guerrillas from five villages near al-Amadiyah, which is 15 kilometers (10 miles) from the Turkish border.

The KDP said its attacks were in response to last week's PKK shelling of al-Amadiyah, which left nine people dead and 42 wounded.

Iraqi Kurds have controlled an autonomous enclave in northern Iraq since Baghdad crushed their rebellion following the 1991 Gulf War.

The United States, Britain and France established the protected area after the rebellion was suppressed.

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AP-LD-08-28-97 1738GMT(

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraqi dissidents say Saddam has massed tanks on edge of Kurdish zone<

^By BASSEM MROUE=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has massed tanks and troops on the edge of the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq, a year after his forces invaded the zone, Iraqi dissident groups said Saturday.

''Two hundred tanks have been moved to front-line positions in the north,'' a spokesman of the London-based Iraqi National Congress said.

The buildup of Iraqi forces on the southern border of the zone, which is patrolled by U.S., British, French and Turkish warplanes, was confirmed by one of the two main Iraqi Kurdish groups.

''It is a kind of pressure by the regime,'' said Latif Rashid, the London spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan or PUK.

If the reports are accurate, the buildup has occurred on the eve of the first anniversary of the Iraqi government's intervention in the Kurdish zone.

When Saddam tanks and troops helped the Kurdish Democratic Party wrest control of the zone's unofficial capital, Irbil, from the PUK on Aug. 31 last year, the United States responded by bombarding Iraqi anti-aircraft positions with cruise missiles.

The spokesman for the U.S.-backed INC, an umbrella organisation of Iraqi opposition groups that includes the PUK, said the Iraqi troops ''haven't crossed any lines yet.''

''We have been in touch with the American and British government and they are watching as well,'' said the spokesman, who insisted on remaining anonymous.

The PUK's Rashid said he did not know why Saddam's troops had approached the zone. Asked if he expected an intervention, he said: ''We expect anything from Baghdad's regime.''

A spokesman for the KDP, which virtually shares control of the zone with its PUK rival, could not be contacted Saturday.

The United States, Britain and France set up the autonomous zone as a ''safe haven'' for the Kurds after Iraqi troops crushed a Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq following the 1991 Gulf war.

On Saturday, Iraq marked the anniversary of the 1996 intervention with a statement from the defense minister. Lt. Gen. Sultan Hashim Ahmed told the official Iraqi News Agency that Iraqi forces reached their goals one hour after the attack began and ''the whole mission was carried out within 12 hours.''

The INC spokesman said the mayor of the town of Dayali, just south of the zone, had told a meeting of pro-Saddam militiamen on Aug. 27 that government control would soon return to the zone.

^bm-jbm<

091313 sep 97

[bulgaria]

AP VVV50 Aa ----- Syria-Iraqi Refugees

09-09 4:14p

Iraqi refugees stage sit-in protesting UNHCR aid cut

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) - Some 300 Iraqi refugees in Syria staged a sit-in at the the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees office in Damascus on Tuesday to protest a cut in the aid they receive from the U.N. organization.

The refugees have been protesting the UNHCR action for the past two months, demanding that the United Nations to allocate some money for them from the proceeds of the U.N. oil-for-food deal with Iraq.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait that included a ban on oil exports. But last December it approved limited oil sales allowing the country to buy needed food and medicine for its 20 million people.

There are at least 25,000 Iraqis in Syria who fled the country before and after the Gulf War, fearing political repression. Some 2,000 of them are UNHCR-recognized refugees.

Aid was cut to about half the refugees in July, continuing only for disabled and old people. Lack of funds has prompted the UNHCR to cut financial aid to refugees throughout the world who have lived for more than six months in the host country.

The protesters handed over a statement to the UNHCR office demanding a solution to their plight and help in settling in a third country. The said the cut in funds was a "very dangerous precedent" in a country with few job opportunities.

str-my-ggl

RMA3171-----

r I BC-Turkey-IraqiKurds 09-15 0163

233 87 intw rom ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraqi Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurds kill 24 Turkish Kurdish rebels(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group has killed 24 Turkish Kurdish rebels in clashes in northern Iraq, a report said Monday.

The rebels were killed in areas close to the Iraqi-Iranian border, according to the radio station of the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, which was monitored by Turkey's Anatolia news agency.

It was not clear when the clashes took place.

Twenty-two other Turkish Kurdish rebels were reported killed by KDP fighters in clashes earlier this month.

In May, the KDP helped Turkish troops in a massive operation against the rebels who maintain bases in areas close to the Turkish border.

Turkey withdrew its forces in June and has pressed Kurdish group to stop the autonomy-seeking guerrillas from carrying out cross-border attacks.

More than 28,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish fighting since 1984.

(sf)

AP-LD-09-15-97 1321GMT(

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u i BC-Turkey-IraqiKurds 1stLd-Writethru 09-16 0204

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^BC-Turkey-Iraqi Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru<

^Iraqi Kurds kill 15 Turkish Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq<

^Eds: ADDS comments from KDP official, no pick up<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group has killed 15 more Turkish Kurdish rebels in fighting in northern Iraq, the group's radio said Tuesday.

The radio station of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, which was monitored by Turkey's Anatolia news agency, said the fighting took place near the Turkish-Iraqi border area. Twelve other rebels were injured in the clashes.

The KDP office could not confirm the specific report.

But the KDP representative in Ankara, Safeen Dizayee, said the group's fighters had been combing the border areas in the past few weeks after the Turkish Kurdish rebels shelled civilian settlements.

"From time to time, there has been hot contacts between them," Dizayee told The Associated Press.

Twenty-four rebels were reported killed by the KDP Monday.

The KDP allied with Turkish troops when they crossed into northern Iraq in May in pursuit of the rebels who maintain bases near the border.

More than 28,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish fighting since 1984.

(sf-fd)

AP-LD-09-16-97 1325GMT<

[Cyprus]

AP VVV24 Aa ----- Turkey-Iraq-Kurds

09-24 10:07p

Turkish troops start operation inside Iraq: report

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Some 8,000 Turkish troops were carrying out a wide-scale operation inside northern Iraq against Turkish Kurdish rebels, a private television reported Wednesday.

The troops were stationed along the Turkish border within Iraq, left over from a large-scale incursion against the rebels last May, NTV television said. The operation, which started Sunday, was backed by gunship helicopters and fighter jets, NTV added.

A spokesman for the Iraqi Kurdish group in control of the region confirmed that Turkish troops had never left the mountainous border areas since May but did not know of a new operation.

"Turkish troops have never withdrawn completely," Faik Nerweyi of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, told The Associated Press. "They might be carrying out operations on the mountains near the border, but we wouldn't necessarily know."

Turkish military officials did not return calls Wednesday.

The incursion in May involved an estimate of 25,000-50,000 troops as well as hundreds of tanks and heavy artillery. At the end of June, the military said it had withdrawn most of its forces out, but has never announced a complete withdrawal.

The PKK rebel group has had bases in northern Iraq since the Baghdad government lost control of the region after the Gulf War. The Iraqi Kurdish enclave protected by U.S.-led allied war planes since then is controlled by two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups, which have at times fought each other.

One of those, the KDP, has sided with Turkey against the PKK recently. KDP guerrillas have been fighting the rebels frequently in the last few months, Nerweyi said. The PKK has attacked several remote villages, burning houses and killing scores of villagers, he said.

(yo/djw)

241908 sep 97

[baghdad]

U.N. convoy comes under attack in northern Iraq

Eds: INSERTS comment from World Food Program official in 11th graf

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - A convoy of United Nations vehicles came under attack from gunmen in northern Iraq, but no one was hurt in the gunfire, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday.

Eric Falt, spokesman for the U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, said the attack Monday followed a similar ambush in northern Iraq Sept. 29 that has not previously been reported.

An office of the U.N. oil-for-food program in Baghdad also was attacked Saturday, but no injuries to U.N. personnel were reported in any of the incidents.

Falt said the two attacks in northern Iraq were "a serious escalation" in the security situation of U.N. workers of the oil-for-food program under which Iraq is allowed to sell oil to buy humanitarian goods for its people.

In Monday's ambush, Falt said initial reports are that the gunfire came from an area occupied by the Kurdistan Workers Party, known by the Kurdish acronym PKK, which is made up of Turkish Kurds.

"A convoy of five U.N. vehicles was ambushed by a group of armed men in the village of Sheladiza," Falt said. "The convoy was fired on by automatic weapons and possibly small caliber mortars. One vehicle was hit and no injuries were reported."

The village is in the Dohuk area, 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the Turkish border.

"The vehicles were U.N. marked cars carrying the U.N. flag and were in an area where no other cars were passing by," said Falt.

He said the convoy included two U.N. guard vehicles and other cars carrying 10 workers for the World Food Program, who are involved in distributing food under the oil-for-food program.

Falt noted Turkish troops also were present in the area when the attack occurred. Turkish forces had entered into northern Iraq to attack the PKK, which demands autonomy from Turkey and is regarded by the Turks as a separatists movement.

Holdbrook Arthur, director for the World Food Program in Iraq, said the attack Monday pointed up "the unstable and difficult environment" that the agency's workers faced in northern Iraq.

The first, 11th graf BC-Iran-UN

wf-ggl

081116 oct 97

[Iraq]

AP VVV91 Aa ----- Iraq-Kurds

10-08 2:16p

Kurdish leaders fail again to end dispute in northern Iraq

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - Leaders of the two main Kurdish factions in northern Iraq again failed to end their dispute and form a joint administration for the autonomous enclave, Kurdish officials said Wednesday.

Senior representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan met Monday and Tuesday in London with British officials in another effort to bring a durable peace to Iraq's northern Kurdish region.

But the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said no agreement was reached on the main issue - reestablishing "a unified government" for the enclave. Attempts to reach the two parties' leaders by telephone for comment were unsuccessful.

The two factions agreed to a cease-fire in April and promised to open negotiations on a permanent settlement to end fighting that started last year after Iraqi troops helped the KDP expel its rivals from the key city of Irbil.

The cease-fire was mediated by the United States. Turkey and Britain also have been mediating between the two groups to try to strengthen the truce. The U.S. and British effort is aimed at having the Kurds form a strong alliance against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Among the points of the Kurds' dispute are their relations with Saddam and lucrative revenues from levies collected by the KDP from goods coming across the border from Turkey.

The United States, Britain and France established a protected area for the Kurds in northern Iraq after Baghdad crushed a Kurdish rebellion following the 1992 Gulf War. But infighting has hampered Kurdish efforts to win more political and economic autonomy.
sn-ggl

081117 oct 97

[bulgaria]

AP VVV87 Aa ----- Iraq-UN, 2nd Ld-Writethru

10-07 8:07p

U.N. convoy comes under attack in northern Iraq

Eds: UPDATES in 6th-8th grafs with U.N. spokesman in New York saying 50 rounds fired; EDITS to conform.

By WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - A convoy of United Nations vehicles came under attack from gunmen in northern Iraq, but no one was hurt in the gunfire, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday.

Eric Falt, spokesman for the U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, said the attack Monday followed a similar ambush in northern Iraq on Sept. 29 that has not previously been reported.

An office of the U.N. oil-for-food program in Baghdad also was attacked Saturday, but no injuries to U.N. personnel were reported in any of the incidents.

Falt said the two attacks in northern Iraq were "a serious escalation" in the security situation of U.N. workers of the oil-for-food program, under which Iraq is allowed to sell oil to buy humanitarian goods for its people.

In Monday's ambush, Falt said initial reports were that the gunfire came from an area occupied by the Kurdistan Workers Party, known by the Kurdish acronym PKK, which is made up of Turkish Kurds.

In New York, U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard told reporters "the direction of the fire came from a mountain range that has been occupied by the PKK."

He said that at least 50 rounds were fired at the five-vehicle convoy, which included two carrying U.N. guards and three with World Food Program workers. The WFP is involved in distributing food.

The Turkish Kurds who have taken refuge in northern Iraq do not receive food rations under the oil-for-food program, which is restricted to Iraqi nationals.

Falt said the convoy was ambushed in the village of Sheladiza.

"The convoy was fired on by automatic weapons and possibly small caliber mortars," Falt said. "One vehicle was hit and no injuries were reported."

The village is in the Dohuk area, 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the Turkish border.

Falt said the vehicles were marked with the U.N. insignia and flying the U.N. flag.

He noted that Turkish troops also were present in the area when the attack occurred. Turkish forces had entered into northern Iraq to attack the PKK, which demands autonomy from Turkey and is regarded by the Turks as a separatists movement.

Holdbrook Arthur, director for the World Food Program in Iraq, said the attack Monday pointed up "the unstable and difficult environment" that the agency's workers faced in northern Iraq.

The first incident on Sept. 29 came when a convoy of U.N. vehicles in the Haj Omran area near Irbil came also under attack while returning 150 Kurdish refugees from Iran back to Iraq, Falt said.

He said the convoy "came under heavy shelling in an area occupied by PKK members."

Falt said that the humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, Denis Halliday, was making a scheduled trip to northern Iraq next week and would express his concerns over the safety of U.N. workers.

Halliday met Monday with Saad el-Faisal, an Iraqi deputy foreign minister, and discussed the security of the U.N. staff in Baghdad following Sunday's attack on an office of the World Health Organization.

No group has claimed responsibility for that incident, in which four men fired automatic rifles and threw grenades. One of the attackers was wounded and arrested. Iraq maintains he is of Iranian origin, but Iran denies any involvement in the incident.

The WHO building contains an office of the oil-for-food program, which was approved late last year by the United Nations as an exception to the ban on Iraq exporting oil as part of the sanctions imposed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991.

It allows Iraq to sell dollars 2 billion in oil over a period of six months to earn money to buy food and humanitarian goods. The program is now in its second six-month period.

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233 87 intw rom ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Turkish troops start withdrawal from northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Claiming another success against Kurdish guerrillas, Turkey has begun pulling out thousands of troops sent across the border into northern Iraq, a military commander said Monday.

But small units will remain in Iraq to help a local Iraqi Kurdish group control the region and prevent the return of the Turkish Kurdish rebels, Gen. Rasim Betir told the Anatolia news agency.

An estimated 16,000 Turkish troops have been involved in the latest cross-border operation since Sept. 21.

The first military convoy heading back entered through the Habur crossing in southeastern Turkey early Monday morning, Anatolia reported.

"All terrorist presence in the region has been wiped out," Gen Betir said, putting the rebel death toll at 816 and military casualties at 15.

Turkish troops have gone into northern Iraq frequently in the last two years, each time claiming total success. But guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, have returned to their bases in the area soon after the troops returned home.

The military did not withdraw completely after its previous incursion in May, leaving 8,000 soldiers behind in Iraq.

Baghdad lost its control over northern Iraq after the Gulf War. U.S.-led allied warplanes enforce a no-fly zone over the region and keep Iraqi troops away. Two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups vie for control. One of them has recently sided with Turkey against the PKK.

The PKK, fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984 has taken advantage of the power vacuum, fortifying dozens of camps in the area, from where it launches cross-border attacks on Turkish targets. Turkey's borders with Iraq and Iran are in a mountainous area that is difficult to control.

(yo/vls)

AP-LD-10-13-97 1011GMT<

RMA3354-----

r I BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds 1stLd 10-13 0215

233 87 intw rom ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld<

^Turkish troops start withdrawal from northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with reported clashes between Iraqi Kurdish groups<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Claiming another success against Kurdish guerrillas, Turkey has begun pulling out thousands of troops sent across the border into northern Iraq, a military commander said Monday.

A small units will remain in Iraq to help a local Iraqi Kurdish group control the region and prevent the return of the Turkish Kurdish rebels, Gen. Rasim Betir told the Anatolia news agency.

But as Turkish troops withdrew, an Iraqi Kurdish group reported Monday being attacked by a rival Iraqi Kurdish faction, in the first serious breach of a year-long cease-fire between the two groups.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, said forces of its rival the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, backed by heavy weapons, launched attacks on its positions at three separate locations.

The report came just a week after their leaders met in London to try and end their dispute and form a joint administration in northern Iraq.

The KDP had been aiding the estimated 16,000 Turkish troops that were involved in the latest cross-border operation since Sept. 21.

The first military, 4th graf pvs<

(sf)

AP-LD-10-13-97 1143GMT<

RMA3358-----

r I BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds 2ndLd 10-13 0381

233 87 intw rom ank

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld<

^Kurdish factions attack rival group in norther Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with Turkish Kurdish rebels joining forces with Iraqi Kurdish faction, U.N. confirmation, details on clashes, claims on captured towns and 27 Turkish soldiers killed<

^AP Photo ANK107<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Just as Turkey started pulling its troops out from northern Iraq, serious fighting broke out Monday between rival Iraqi Kurdish factions.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, said forces of its rival the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK, backed by heavy weapons, launched attacks on its positions at three separate locations.

A United Nations official in Baghdad confirmed the clashes, calling them "the most serious outbreak of violence in about a year." A cease-fire between the KDP and PUK had mostly held since last October, except for small skirmishes.

The KDP claimed its rival was assisted by the Turkish Kurdish rebels, which Turkey's three-week-long cross-border operation had aimed to wipe out from the region. The Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, has been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey, but has bases in northern Iraq.

"The PUK and the PKK, along with other opposition groups, launched a massive operation against the KDP this morning," pro-Kurdish Med-TV reported. The London-based station has close contacts with the PKK.

Qasre and Khanekah, towns near the Iranian border, were captured by this alliance, Med-TV said. The town of Salahuddin, where the headquarters of the KDP are, was surrounded, it added.

The KDP said there was fierce fighting near Shaqlawah, a town 20 kilometers (12 miles) east of Salahaddin.

Claiming another success against Kurdish guerrillas, Turkey began pulling out Monday, but said small units will remain in Iraq to help KDP control the region.

There were no Turkish troops in the areas where clashes between KDP and PUK-PKK alliance took place, Med-TV said. But it claimed PKK guerrillas attacked withdrawing Turkish troops Monday near the border, killing 27 soldiers.

The clashes came a week after PUK and KDP leaders met in London to try and end their dispute and form a joint administration in northern Iraq.

The KDP, 6th graf pvs<

(yo/vls)

AP-LD-10-13-97 1414GMT<

cai intj 888 02 nat ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds(

^Kurdish factions report heavy fighting in northern Iraq(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group claimed Tuesday that its fighters are advancing towards the stronghold of its main rival on the second day of fighting to control the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said its guerrillas have taken control of hill tops overlooking the resort of Sararash, which is under the Kurdistan Democratic Party's rule.

PUK forces have blocked the main roads to Sararash and KDP forces are retreating to the nearby city of Irbil, said a statement by a PUK leader, Adnan al-Mufti, who is based in Cairo.

The claims could not be independently confirmed.

Al-Mufti also accused Turkey of helping the KDP and said that two Turkish fighters jets attacked PUK's positions in the mountainous area near Sararash.

But a KDP spokesman in London denied the claim and accused the PUK of initiating the fighting. He warned that the renewed battles will lead to foreign interference in the Kurdish dispute.

The United Nations, which is responsible for transporting and distributing humanitarian aid in northern Iraq, confirmed the fighting and said "it appears to be the most serious outbreak of violence since the same period last year."

Hostilities are taking place in several areas along the dividing line between the two factions, and U.N. officials in the region are traveling only if necessary, said the statement by U.N. spokesman Eric Falt in Baghdad.

The fighting is for the control of an autonomous Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq that was set up by the United States, Britain and France as a protected area for the Kurds after Baghdad crushed a Kurdish rebellion following the 1991 Gulf war.

The plan ran into trouble as Kurdish groups began fighting each other for power.

KDP and PUK, the two main Kurd factions, agreed in October 1996 to a cease-fire mediated by the United States, Turkey and Britain. But two days of talks last week in London ended in a failure, and fighting resumed on Monday.

The U.S. and British effort to bring peace in the enclave is aimed at getting the Kurds to form a strong alliance against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

^sn/vj(

AP-LD-10-14-97 1320GMT(

U.N. official goes to northern Iraq to ease tension among Kurds
BY WAIEL FALEH

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - A senior U.N. official in Iraq traveled to the north Wednesday, hoping to persuade two rival Kurd factions to stop fighting and allow humanitarian aid to the area.

Heavy fighting was raging Wednesday in the area with both sides reporting territorial gains and heavy but undetermined number of casualties. No independent confirmation was available.

"The situation in northern Iraq continues to be of great concern to the United Nations following the outbreak of violence," U.N. spokesman Eric Falt told reporters.

U.N. official Dennis Halliday will "seek a stop to all hostilities" so that the U.N. can carry out its programs, including a polio vaccination campaign on Monday and Sunday, Falt said.

He said movement of U.N. personnel and supplies has been restricted in large parts of the Irbil province along the line dividing the areas controlled by the two factions.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party resumed fighting Monday for the control of the autonomous Kurdish enclave, ending a one-year-old cease fire mediated by the United States, Turkey and Britain.

In a statement received in Cairo, the KDP said its fighters repulsed a PUK offensive to take control of the strategic hill tops. Meanwhile, the PUK accused Turkey, which supports the KDP, of sending war planes to attack its bases.

The United Nations is responsible for transporting and distributing humanitarian items in the area under an oil-for-food program, which allows Iraq to sell only a limited quantity of oil to buy food and other humanitarian goods for its citizens. Still, Iraq cannot distribute the items in northern Iraq because of its past record of repression there.

Three Kurd-dominated northern provinces were made a protected enclave by the United States, Britain and France after President Saddam Hussein crushed a Kurdish rebellion following the 1991 Gulf war. But the enclave itself soon fell victim to internecine fighting.

Falt said the clashes between KDP and PUK could disrupt a one-month U.N. campaign to vaccinate sheep, causing the deaths of many of the estimated 800,000 sheep in the area.

He said Halliday, the director of the oil-for-food program, will request the KDP and PUK to "fully respect their obligations and facilitate the free flow of humanitarian assistance."

He said the U.N. also has received reports that many people who sympathize with warring factions have been expelled from each area, creating a mass of domestic refugees.

Another concern is over electricity supply to the KDP-held Irbil, which comes from PUK-controlled Sulaimaniya and has been cut off, said Falt.

wf/vj

u i BC-Iraq-Kurds 1stLd 10-15 0296

cai intj 888 02 nat ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld

^U.N. official goes to northern Iraq to ease tension among Kurds<

^Eds: UPDATES with four killed, two wounded in reported Turkish attack in grafs 8-9.<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

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Meanwhile, the PUK accused Turkey, which supports the KDP, of sending four warplanes to attack its bases on Tuesday, killing four civilians and wounding two.

Turkish military officials were not available for comment.

^The United Nations, 9th graf<

AP-LD-10-15-97 1454GMT<

11/09/96 12:06
 Halabjan (National Geographic Atlas)
 Hatra (National Geographic Atlas)
 Irbil (from Websters)
 J. Jila (National Geographic Atlas)
 Jarmo (National Geographic Atlas)
 Jawan (National Geographic Atlas)

Z 53738

02

Kalar (AP usage)
 Kara Henjir (AP usage)
 Karokh (mountain) (National Geographic Atlas)
 Khabat (AP usage)
 Khanaqin (National Geographic Atlas)
 Khurmal (National Geographic Atlas)
 Kifri (National Geographic Atlas)
 Kingirban (National Geographic Atlas)
 Kirkuk (National Geographic Atlas)
 Kuysanjaq (National Geographic Atlas)
 Makhmur (National Geographic Atlas)
 Mandali (National Geographic Atlas)
 Mansuriyah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Mawat (National Geographic Atlas)
 Maydan (National Geographic Atlas)
 Miqdadiyah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Mosul (from Websters)
 Mushorah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Naft Khaneh (National Geographic Atlas)
 Najmah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Nimrud (Calah) (National Geographic Atlas)
 Nineveh (from Websters)
 Nuzi (National Geographic Atlas)
 Panjwin (National Geographic Atlas)
 Qaiyara (National Geographic Atlas)
 Qal'at Diza (National Geographic Atlas)
 Qarah Bulak (National Geographic Atlas)
 Qarah Dag (mountain) (National Geographic Atlas)
 Qarah Tappah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Rab (National Geographic Atlas)
 Rah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Raz (National Geographic Atlas)
 RL (National Geographic Atlas)
 Salah Din (Kurdistan town, also province north of Baghdad)
 Samar (National Geographic Atlas)
 Sarsang (National Geographic Atlas)
 Sassan (National Geographic Atlas)
 Sewarah Tuk (National Geographic Atlas)
 Shaqlawah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Sinjar (National Geographic Atlas)
 Siroenk (AP usage) (suspect this is same town as Sarsang??)
 Sulaymaniyah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tajambur (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tall Abu Zahir (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tall Afar (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tall Kayf (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tamim (provincial) (AP usage)
 Taqtaq (National Geographic Atlas)
 Taynal (AP usage)
 Tazah Khurmatu (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tell Matarrah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tepe Gawra (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tikrit (National Geographic Atlas)
 Tuz Khurmatu (National Geographic Atlas)
 Zakhu (National Geographic Atlas)
 Zunmar (AP usage)

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KURDISH PLACENAMES

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The Gulf War produced a run of heroic coverage of Iraqi Kurdistan by a legion of AP reporters. It also left chaos in our style for spelling names of placenames in that region.

For instance, it was not unusual to see in the space of two or three days: Sulemaniya, Sulemaniyah, Sulamaniya, Sulaymaniyah, Suleimaniya, Suleimaniyah, and other variants (the correct spelling is the 4th one in the list). Or, Duhok, Dohuk and Dahuk (the correct spelling is the 3rd). Or, Irbil, Arbil and Erbil (correct spelling is the 1st).

Here's how we've been spelling these names for years. Much appreciate everyone's efforts in sticking to these spellings, which are based on AP's bibles (first, Websters, then the National Geographic Atlas) or, when these sources don't help, AP's established usage. For any names that don't appear on list: go ahead, make up your own spelling. We've included only Iraqi Kurdistan and bordering areas inside Iraq. For Turkey, consult Ankara. For Iran, consult Nicosia.

For your guidance: names ending in Dagh are mountains, names beginning with Tell are often archaeological sites.

Ad-Dawr (National Geographic Atlas)
 Ain Zalah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Al-Quwayr (National Geographic Atlas)
 Altun Kupri (National Geographic Atlas)
 Amadiyah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Aqrah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Arbat (National Geographic Atlas)
 Ashur (National Geographic Atlas)
 Aski Mawsil (National Geographic Atlas)
 Ayn Sifni (National Geographic Atlas)
 Az-Zibar (National Geographic Atlas)
 Ba'iji (National Geographic Atlas)
 Balad (National Geographic Atlas)
 Baranand Dagh (mountain) (National Geographic Atlas)
 Barzan (AP usage)
 Bayenjan (AP usage)
 Bazyan (AP usage)
 Bushayriyah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Butmah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Calah (Nimrud) (National Geographic Atlas)
 Chay Khanah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Chemchamal (National Geographic Atlas)
 Chuwartah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Dahuk (National Geographic Atlas)
 Daratow (AP usage)
 Dibagah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Diyala (river and province) (National Geographic Atlas)
 Diyala Weir (National Geographic Atlas)
 Dur Sharrukin (National Geographic Atlas)
 Eskiklik (AP usage)
 Faysh Khabur (National Geographic Atlas)
 Habbaniyah (air base) (National Geographic Atlas)
 Hadraniyah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Haj Omran pass (AP usage)
 Halabjah (National Geographic Atlas)
 Hatra (National Geographic Atlas)
 Irbil (from Websters)
 Jalula (National Geographic Atlas)
 Jarmo (National Geographic Atlas)
 Jawan (National Geographic Atlas)

68 23 02 87 cai ank uni gnv

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 0411<

^U.N. official goes to northern Iraq to ease tension among Kurds<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A U.N. mediator in Iraq headed north Wednesday to negotiate an end to heavy fighting between two rival Kurdish factions seeking control over a protected enclave, where many Kurds have reportedly been forced to flee their homes.

U.N. official Dennis Halliday will "seek a stop to all hostilities" and ask the factions to let food and other humanitarian aid into the disputed area, U.N. spokesman Eric Falt said.

"The situation in northern Iraq continues to be of great concern to the United Nations following the outbreak of violence," Falt said.

On Wednesday, both sides reported heavy casualties and territorial gains. The reports could not be independently confirmed.

The United Nations also received reports that sympathizers of the warring factions have been expelled from their homes, creating a mass of domestic refugees, Falt said.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party resumed fighting Monday for the control of the autonomous Kurdish enclave, ending a year-old cease-fire mediated by the United States, Turkey and Britain.

In a statement received in Cairo Wednesday, the KDP said its fighters repulsed a PUK offensive to take control of the strategic hill tops.

Meanwhile, the PUK accused Turkey, which supports the KDP, of sending four warplanes to attack its bases in a Tuesday raid that killed four civilians and wounded two others.

Turkish military officials were not available for comment.

Three Kurd-dominated northern provinces were declared a protected enclave after President Saddam Hussein crushed a Kurdish rebellion following the 1991 Gulf war. But the enclave itself soon fell victim to internecine fighting.

The United Nations is responsible for transporting and distributing humanitarian items in the area under an oil-for-food program, which allows Iraq to sell only a limited quantity of oil to buy food and other humanitarian goods for its citizens. Still, Iraq cannot distribute the items in northern Iraq because of its past record of repression there.

Halliday, the director of the oil-for-food program, will request the KDP and PUK to "fully respect their obligations and facilitate the free flow of humanitarian assistance," which include a polio vaccination campaign, Falt said.

AP-LD-10-15-97 1821GMT<

CAS4995-----

u i BC-Iraq-Kurds 2ndLd 10-15 0352

cai intj 888 02 nat ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld

^U.N. official goes to northern Iraq to ease tension among Kurds<

^Eds: UPDATES with Iraq offer to mediate dispute in grafs 10-11.<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

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Turkish military officials were not available for comment.

Iraq, which has long sought to reassert its control over the north, offered Wednesday to mediate between the two sides.

"We hope that the two sides will respond positively to our advice and turn to negotiations under the supervision of the government," Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said in a statement carried by the official Iraqi News Agency.

^The United Nations, 9th graf<

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68 23 02 87 cai ank uni gnv

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld,0389<

^U.N. official goes to northern Iraq to ease tension among Kurds<

^Eds: UPDATES with Iraq offer to mediate dispute in grafs 11-12<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

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^The United, 11th graf<

AP-LD-10-15-97 2050GMT<

u i BC-Iraq-Kurds

10-16 0343

ank rom intw 233 87 cai

^BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^Turkey-backed Iraqi Kurdish group hits back at rival<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Backed by Turkish artillery and air power, an Iraqi Kurdish faction inflicted heavy losses on its rival in northern Iraq, Turkey's official Anatolia agency said on Thursday.

Turkish bombardment on Wednesday hit positions of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which has reportedly joined forces with Turkish Kurdish rebels, Anatolia said.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, backed by Turkey, killed 94 PUK fighters during clashes near the Iraqi towns of Rawanduz, Haj Omran, Shaqlawah and Aqra, Anatolia said.

The first two towns are near the Iranian border, while the other lie on a central main road connecting major Kurdish cities.

Anatolia, quoting KDP's radio, put the KDP death toll at 17.

Kurdistan Democratic Party fighters have helped the Turkish army in its efforts to wipe out bases of the Turkish Kurdish rebel organization, PKK, in northern Iraq during recent offensives. Turkey keeps artillery in the area to keep the PKK away from the Turkish border.

A Patriotic Union statement Thursday claimed Turkish bombing killed five fighters Wednesday. It also accused Turkish jets of bombing villages, killing four civilians Tuesday.

'If there's been any Turkish intervention, it has only targeted PKK positions,' Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel said. 'We don't support one Iraqi Kurdish group against the other.'

KDP radio said its rival had cut off water and electricity to Irbil, the provincial capital, which is held by KDP. The energy blackout is common practice during fighting between the rivals. PUK controls the dam which produces the region's power.

The clashes ended a year-long ceasefire between the two groups, brokered by the United States, Turkey and Britain.

Three Kurd-dominated northern provinces were made a protected enclave after the 1991 Gulf War. Saddam's troops are kept at bay by U.S.-led allied planes monitoring the area.

(yo/djw)

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10-16 0049

WLDP PHO PARP

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u i BC-Iraq-Kurds 1stLd 10-16 0253

ank rom intw 233 87

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld<

^Turkey-backed Iraqi Kurdish group hits back at rival<

^Eds: UPDATES with claim of further Turkish bombing Thursday, killing 30, reported Iraqi troop and tank movements near the Kurdish enclave, violations of no-fly zone<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Backed by Turkish artillery and air power, an Iraqi Kurdish faction inflicted heavy losses on its rival in northern Iraq, Turkey's official Anatolia agency said on Thursday.

Turkish bombardment on Wednesday hit positions of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which has reportedly joined forces with Turkish Kurdish rebels, Anatolia said.

An Iraqi opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress, said in London that bombing Thursday killed at least 30 people. The report could not be confirmed.

Baghdad has moved some 10,000 troops and 200 tanks to the area neighboring the Kurdish enclave, the group also claimed.

Iraq has been kept away from its northern part since the Gulf War. The enclave is protected by U.S.-led planes. But Saddam Hussein sent tanks and troops into the enclave in 1996 at the invitation of one of the rival Kurdish groups.

Iraqi Republican Guard units were building up around Makhmur, some 30 kilometers (20 miles) southwest of the Kurdish enclave's strategic capital, Irbil, the Iraqi opposition group said.

Iraqi jets violated the no-fly zone in the north Thursday for reconnaissance flights over the areas of heavy fighting, it added.

The guerrillas, 3rd graf pvs<

(yo/djw)

AP-LD-10-16-97 1655GMT<

CAS5047-----

u i BC-Iraq-Kurds 1stLd-Writethru 10-18 0321

intj 888 nat cai 02 ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru

^Kurdish faction joins cease-fire in northern Iraq(

^Eds: UPDATES throughout with Kurdish group refusing to withdraw, says must be progress in peace talks first. No pickup.(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ A Kurdish faction has declared its support for a cease-fire that began Friday in northern Iraq following several days of fighting with rival Kurds.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said it would abide by the truce for 72 hours to allow its rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, to withdraw its forces to positions it held earlier this week.

The PUK accepted the cease-fire Friday and said it was ready for talks. But on Saturday, a PUK spokesman ruled out any withdrawal unless the other side first made a concession.

"We're not withdrawing within 72 hours unless something substantial happens to show us that the KDP will be brought into a lasting political solution," said PUK spokesman Shazad Saib, who is based in Ankara, Turkey.

"We cannot withdraw and then come back all the time after seeing no improvement on the political arena," he said.

The United States, Turkey and Britain mediated the truce, which took effect at 8 p.m. local time Friday. There were no immediate reports of violations, and the KDP said in a statement that, for now, it would "refrain from launching a counter-attack."

The PUK and KDP have uneasily shared power in an enclave in northern Iraq set up by Western allies in 1991 after Iraqi government forces crushed a Kurdish revolt in the region.

Before the cease-fire Friday, there were reports of Turkish attacks on the PUK, which Turkey has accused of collaborating with Kurdish rebels fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey.

Turkey repeatedly has carried out large-scale operations in northern Iraq aimed at the Turkish Kurdish rebels, and the KDP has aided Turkish troops in the fighting.

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CAS5039-----

u i BC-Iraq-Kurds 10-18 0222

intj 888 nat cai 02 ank

^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Kurdish faction joins cease-fire in northern Iraq<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld(

^Iraqi Kurdish group accuses Turkey of damaging peace process with air raids(

^Eds: UPDATES with Turkish foreign ministry saying ceasefire declared between Kurdish factions(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish faction accused Turkey on Friday of "effectively ending" the peace process between rival Kurdish factions by shelling its positions in northern Iraq.

But the Turkish Foreign Ministry said a ceasefire had been declared between the warring Iraqi Kurdish groups at 8 p.m. (1600 GMT), and urged the sides to abide by it.

The statement came hours after an Iraqi opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress, claimed that 40 Turkish tanks and 50 armored personnel carriers moved to the northern tip of Hariri Valley, about 150 kilometers (114 miles) south of the Turkish-Iraqi border.

The penetration, if correct, is the deepest ever by Turkish troops. Turkey repeatedly has carried out large-scale operations in northern Iraq aimed at Kurdish rebels.

Turkish military spokesmen were not available for comment.

The Turkish troops were trying to block the advancing forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK, which Turkey has accused of collaborating with Turkish Kurdish rebels.

In retaliation for the Turkish air raids, PUK fired six Russian-made surface-to-surface missiles at its rival's headquarters in Salahuddin town on Thursday, the Iraqi opposition group reported. It was not clear if any casualties occurred.

The ministry statement said Turkey, the United States and Britain had asked the sides to withdraw troops to positions held on Oct. 12, before serious clashes between the two groups erupted.

Turkey, along, 7th graf pvs(
(sf/djw)

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 3rd Ld-Writethru, 0566<

^Iraqi Kurdish group accepts cease-fire, asks Turkey to end intervention<

^Eds: RECASTS throughout to UPDATE with Kurdish group accepting cease-fire. CHANGES overline.<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — An Iraqi Kurdish faction said Friday it accepted a cease-fire with a rival group and asked the United States and Britain to push Turkey to end its military intervention in northern Iraq.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan was ready to talk with its rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, but reserved the right to defend itself if the rival group attacks or if "Turkey continues its aggression against our fighters," Mohammed Sabir Ismail, the group's representative in Paris, told The Associated Press by telephone.

Earlier Friday, the PUK accused Turkey of shelling its positions in northern Iraq.

An Iraqi opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress, claimed that 40 Turkish tanks and 50 armored personnel carriers moved to the northern tip of Hariri Valley, about 150 kilometers (90 miles) south of the Turkish-Iraqi border.

That would be the deepest ever Turkish push into Iraq. Turkey repeatedly has carried out large-scale operations in northern Iraq aimed at Turkish Kurdish rebels.

Turkish military spokesmen were not available for comment.

In Washington, State Department spokesman James Foley said both Iraqi Kurdish factions had agreed to reinstate the year-old cease-fire.

But the KDP was distrustful of the announcement.

"Up to now, we don't have any practical sign on the ground that the PUK has committed itself to the cease-fire or that they are true to their claim of accepting it," said Dilshad Miran, the KDP's representative in London.

"The KDP has not yet defined its position concerning the cease-fire and it will hold a meeting later tonight and issue a statement either late Friday or early Saturday," Miran added.

Foley, speaking on behalf of the United States, Turkey and Great Britain, said the three held the PUK responsible for this week's fighting, which interrupted a largely successful truce negotiated last October.

Turkish troops crossed into northern Iraq last month to destroy camps that Turkish Kurdish rebels maintain in the region to launch cross-border attacks on Turkey.

The KDP has been aiding the Turkish troops, while Turkey has accused the PUK of collaborating with the rebels.

The PUK said Turkish jets and artillery have been providing support for the KDP since the two rivals resumed fighting on Monday.

The PUK claimed Turkish jets bombed areas near the towns of Shaqlawa and Khalifa Thursday, for the fourth consecutive day, causing civilian casualties.

Turkey has denied the allegations, saying its jets only target positions of the Turkish Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

In retaliation for the Turkish air raids, the PUK fired six Russian-made surface-to-surface missiles at its rival's headquarters in Salahuddin on Thursday, the Iraqi opposition group reported. It was not clear if any casualties occurred.

In addition to helping with the original cease-fire negotiations Turkey has also mediated talks among Iraqi Kurds about forming a joint regional government in northern Iraq.

The rival Iraqi groups have fought for control of the zone since it was set up by the Western allies at the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

AP-LD-10-17-97 2126GMT<

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 2nd Ld-Writethru(

^Iraqi Kurd faction accuses rival of violating cease-fire(

^Eds: RECASTS throughout with cease-fire breach, ADDS BYLINE, CHANGES overline.(

^By MAAMOUN YOUSSEF=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish faction accused its rival Saturday of breaching a cease-fire in northern Iraq less than 24 hours after it came into effect.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan had launched attacks Saturday morning and afternoon in the Irbil region, killing two KDP guerrillas and wounding three others.

In a statement faxed to The Associated Press here, the KDP, led by Massoud Barzani, said the PUK fired mortars on the town of Shaqlawa, 40 km (25 miles) northeast of Irbil, the virtual capital of the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq.

In London, a spokesman for the PUK, led by Jalal Talabani, denied the charge, saying his group had launched no attacks against KDP positions.

"These are empty allegations and all the areas in Kurdistan are quiet," spokesman Latif Rashid told the AP in a telephone interview.

The KDP approved the cease-fire early Saturday and said it would abide by the truce for 72 hours to allow the PUK to withdraw to positions held before the fighting began Oct. 13.

In Ankara, PUK spokesman Shazad Saib said his group would not be making any withdrawals in the next 72 hours "unless something substantial happens to show us that the KDP will be brought into a lasting political solution."

"We cannot withdraw and then come back all the time after seeing no improvement on the political arena," he said.

The PUK accepted the truce shortly before it came into effect at 8 p.m. local time (1700 GMT) Friday.

The United States, Turkey and Britain brokered the cease-fire in week-long contacts with KDP and PUK representatives in various capitals.

The PUK has accused Turkish forces in northern Iraq of attacking its positions and bombarding civilian settlements.

Turkey denied the accusations, but it has accused the PUK of collaborating with Turkish Kurd separatists. Turkish forces entered northern Iraq on Sept. 21 to wipe out the separatists' bases.

Rashid said PUK supporters on Saturday staged huge demonstration against the Turkish intervention in towns and villages in the Kurdish zone.

The PUK and KDP have uneasily shared power in the zone since it was set up by the Western allies in 1991 after Iraqi government forces crushed a Kurdish revolt in the region.

Turkey has carried out repeated large-scale operations in northern Iraq aimed at Turkish Kurd rebels and the KDP has supported Turkish troops in the fighting.

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^Iraq accuses Kurd faction of using missiles<

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq's most influential newspaper Wednesday accused a Kurdish rebel faction of using surface-to-surface missiles on civilian areas, terming it "a dangerous development" in northern Iraq's three-year civil war.

Babil, the daily owned by President Saddam Hussein's son, Odai, said the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan has fired Russian-made Grad missiles on cities and towns while fighting with the rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

Babil neither gave details nor offered evidence to support the claim, which could not be independently verified. Similar unconfirmed allegations were made last week by the KDP.

The PUK and KDP have shared power in a Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq since it was forcibly created by Western allies in 1991 to prevent Saddam's forces from attacking Kurds demanding greater autonomy.

But instead of building peace, the two groups began fighting for power in late 1994 until a cease-fire last year, which collapsed on Oct. 12. A tenuous truce has been in force since Friday.

Traditionally, Saddam has been anti-PUK and close to the KDP. In August-September 1996, he sent tanks and troops to help the KDP regain Irbil town from PUK. This prompted the United States to hit Iraqi targets with some 40 missiles.

Even now Saddam maintains cordial relations with KDP chief Massoud Barzani despite Barzani's close ties with Washington.

Babil said the PUK is being supported by Iran in its latest offensive and "what is special ... is the newly added dangerous development of the PUK's use of surface-to-surface missiles, Grad."

It said PUK's positions are close to the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and urged the United Nations to "interfere as soon as possible to disarm" the guerrillas, saying they represent a threat to Iraq's people and its sovereignty.

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^Iraq distances itself from report in paper owned by Saddam's son(

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq distanced itself Thursday from a report in a newspaper owned by President Saddam Hussein's son that said Kurdish guerrillas were using a Russian missile.

"This editorial does not represent the view of the Iraqi government at all," the official Iraqi News Agency said.

The editorial in the newspaper Babil, which is owned by Saddam's son Odai, said Wednesday that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of two factions vying for control of the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq, had been firing Grad surface-to-surface missiles on towns held by its rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The introduction of Grads constituted a "dangerous development" in the off-on fighting between the two factions, the editorial said. It urged the United Nations to intervene and confiscate the missiles from the PUK, which is led by Jalal Talabani.

INA said Thursday the editorial represented "the personal views of the writer," who is known to have been Babil's editor, Salam Dohi.

Babil is widely read in Iraq because it reprints articles published in Western newspapers that are critical of the government.

It was not clear why the government was sensitive to the Babil editorial.

In Ankara, U.S. and British military attaches were extremely skeptical that the PUK had got hold of Grad missiles.

"We have to be cautious owing to the source of the allegation," a U.S. diplomat said, "especially with Baghdad, I would be suspicious of their motives for such a claim."

A Turkish defense ministry official said he had not heard of the PUK using Grads.

Turkish troops are currently conducting a search and destroy mission against Kurdish separatists in northern Iraq. U.S., British and Turkish warplanes patrol the skies of the northern Iraq, enforcing a "no-fly" zone over the Kurdish autonomous region.

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^Iraqi Kurdish faction says Turkish jets attack its positions(

^By MAAMOUN YOUSSEF=

^Associated Press.Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said Turkish warplane on Thursday raided its bases in northern Iraq and Turkish tanks were preparing for an imminent attack.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said four Turkish jets dropped missiles and incendiary bombs on its positions in several villages around Irbil and near the town of Shaqlawa, 40 kilometers (25 miles) to the north.

Shaqlawa and Irbil, 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the Turkish border, are controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, PUK's rival.

There was no immediate comment from Turkey, but the Turkish Foreign Ministry has in the past denied that Turkish forces would attack the PUK, saying any intervention in northern Iraq would be against Turkish Kurdish separatists, or the PKK.

A PUK statement, faxed to the Associated Press office in Cairo, said the air raids, that began at 4 p.m. local time (1400 GMT), lasted 40 minutes. It said its forces were assessing casualties, but gave no details.

"Twenty Turkish tanks have arrived close to the same positions with an intent to launch an attack which we expect to take place later Thursday night," the statement said.

It said the tanks arrived from Dahuk, a town 115 kilometers (72 miles) northwest of Irbil, and from Aqra, 50 kilometers (30 miles) northwest of Shaqlawa.

It said the KDP has been bombing its positions and mobilizing troops to join the Turkish tanks in the attack.

The PUK has accused Turkish forces of siding with the KDP, while Turkey claims the PUK is collaborating with PKK _ the Kurdistan Workers Party.

Turkish forces have entered northern Iraq several times in the past to wipe out the separatists' bases, the last such incursion was on Sept. 21

The PUK and KDP have shared power in the Kurdish autonomous zone since it was set up by Western allies in 1991 after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces crushed a Kurdish revolt.

Meanwhile, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa criticized Turkey for establishing a buffer zone in northern Iraq in a new bid to seal its borders from hit-and-run attacks by Kurdish rebels.

"Anything that harms the safety of Iraq's territory goes against Egypt's policy and we cannot sympathize with or accept it," Moussa told reporters in Cairo Thursday.

Also, Egypt's Middle East News Agency quoted an identified official at the 22-nation Arab League Thursday that the creation of the buffer zone was a "flagrant aggression against the sovereignty of an Arab state and will only lead to more violence and tension in the region."

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^Iraqi Kurdish faction says Turkish jets attack its positions(

^By MAAMOUN YOUSSEF=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — An Iraqi Kurdish group said Turkish warplane on Thursday raided its bases in northern Iraq and Turkish tanks were preparing for an imminent attack.

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^Iraqi Kurdish group says truce with rival faction is over(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said Friday that it considered a week-long cease-fire in northern Iraq over because of attacks by Turkish jets and the forces of a rival group.

Shazad Saib, the Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said heavy fighting was taking place between the factions in the Rawanduz and Koysanjak regions, close to the Iranian border.

'The cease-fire ended with the Turkish air raids followed by attacks by the KDP,' Saib told The Associated Press in reference to the rival group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The Patriotic Union said Thursday that four Turkish jets fired missiles and dropped incendiary bombs on its positions in several villages some 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the Turkish border.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry confirmed Friday that Turkish jets launched raids in northern Iraq on Thursday, but said they were aimed at Turkish Kurdish rebels who maintain bases in the region.

A Turkish newspaper on Friday claimed that Turkey raided the Patriotic Union to force it to retreat to positions it held before the new spate of fighting erupted.

Hurriyet newspaper said the move was a pre-emptive one, designed to prevent the Kurdistan Democratic Party from seeking help from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The two Iraqi Kurdish groups agreed to a truce a week ago, after fighting broke out again on Oct. 12, ending a year-long cease-fire.

Last year, Saddam's army crossed the 36th parallel and joined forces with the Kurdistan Democratic Party against the rival group.

The zone north of the parallel, where the two factions used to share power, is protected by a U.S.-led force since the end of the Gulf War and it is barred to Saddam's troops.

Turkish forces have entered northern Iraq several times in the past few years to destroy the bases used by Turkish Kurdish rebels seeking autonomy in Turkey.

Officials said Friday said more than 2,500 rebels had been killed in northern Iraq since May.

(sf)

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^Iraqi Kurdish group says truce with rival faction is over<

^Eds: UPDATES with fresh Turkish air raids, Iraqi group calls on international community to intervene, clashes<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said Friday that it considered a week-long cease-fire in northern Iraq over because of attacks by Turkish jets and the forces of a rival group.

Shazad Saib, the Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said heavy fighting was taking place between the factions in the Rawanduz and Kuysanjaq regions, close to the Iranian border.

"The cease-fire ended with the Turkish air raids followed by attacks by the KDP," Saib told The Associated Press in reference to the rival group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The Patriotic Union said Turkish jets fired missiles and dropped incendiary bombs on its positions for a second consecutive day Friday.

The areas bombed Friday were Balisan Valley, Heran and Bani-Harir, about 150 kilometers (114 miles) south of the Turkish-Iraqi border, the Patriotic Union said. Thursday's Turkish shelling hit areas further north.

"We call on the international community to restrain Turkey from pursuing this dangerous policy," the Patriotic Union said in a statement.

The rival Iraqi groups accused each other of launching attacks.

The Patriotic Union said it repelled a Kurdistan Democratic Party attack, in Simaqouli area, southeast of the main Kurdish city Irbil, while KDP accused it of killing one of its fighters and wounding nine others in separate attacks early Friday.

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^Iraqi Kurdish group says truce with rival faction is over(

^Eds: INSERTS PUK casualties in Turkish air raid in 5th graf(

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^Iraqi Kurd leader accuses Turkey of bombing his positions with napalm(

^Eds: RECASTS throughout with Talabani TV quotes, napalm allegation(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurd leader on Saturday accused Turkey of bombing his positions with napalm.

Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, also told the London-broadcast MBC television that Turkey had sided with the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party in the fighting for control of the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq.

"Turkish warplanes launched several air raids today using internationally-banned napalm bombs, as well as missiles and heavy bombs," Talabani told the Arabic-language MBC in a broadcast monitored in Cairo.

"They bombarded several areas indiscriminately," Talabani said in a phone interview from his headquarters in Sulaimaniya, northern Iraq.

He said the air strikes occurred northeast of Rawanduz and in the Balisan valley, areas near the Iranian border.

Earlier Saturday, the PUK accused Turkish fighter-bombers of attacking its positions and nearby villages along the strategic Hamilton road, which links the virtual capital of the Kurdish zone, Irbil, to Iran.

There was no immediate comment from Turkey. But the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Friday that its fighter-bombers had raided northern Iraq, but to attack Turkish Kurdish rebels.

Separately, the Kurdish Democratic Party, which is led by Massou Barzani, said its fighters repulsed Saturday two attempts by the PUK to gain ground near Shaqlawa, a town 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of Irbil.

KDP guerrillas inflicted "huge casualties" on the PUK forces, the KDP office in London said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press.

The two Kurdish factions have uneasily shared power in the Kurdish zone, an autonomous region that has been under the protection of a U.S.-led force since Baghdad government forces crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

The KDP accused the PUK of cutting the power lines to Irbil and nearby villages, describing the move as "a collective punishment" that would adversely affect about 1 million people in the Kurdish zone.

In the television interview, Talabani said the power lines were cut but for "technical reasons."

The PUK said earlier Saturday that the KDP had expelled 1,264 civilians from Irbil on the grounds that they were "PUK sympathizers."

On Oct. 17 the two Kurdish groups agreed to a truce after a week of fighting that shattered a 12-month cease-fire.

The United States said Friday that despite cease-fire violations this week, the truce seemed to be holding.

Turkish forces crossed into Iraq last month in the latest of several incursions during the past few years to destroy bases used by Turkish Kurd separatists.

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^Clashes between Kurdish factions escalate in northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said Sunday its fighters killed 20 guerrillas of a rival faction in overnight clashes in northern Iraq.

The reported fighting was part of a recent round of clashes between the two groups that broke out earlier this month amid a Turkish military operation in the area aimed at Turkish Kurdish guerrillas.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party said it killed 20 fighters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in the area around Balak, close to the Iranian border, said the group's radio, monitored by Turkey's Anatolia news agency.

The Democratic Party also said it recaptured the areas of Roli, Zini, Dergala and Serrevas, which were occupied by the Patriotic Union on Friday.

Shazad Saib, a spokesman for the Patriotic Union, said Sunday he had no information about the recent clashes in northern Iraq.

The two groups have been fighting on and off for years, with a truce reached a year ago. Patriotic Union supports the Turkish Kurdish guerrillas, and its rival is allied with Turkey.

The two Iraqi Kurdish factions operate in an autonomous region that has been under the protection of a U.S.-led force since Baghdad government forces crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

Separately, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, said its guerrillas killed 15 Turkish Kurdish guerrillas in Gelisofi valley.

On Saturday, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan accused Turkey of bombing its positions with napalm.

The Turkish foreign ministry has said its jets had raided northern Iraq last week, but to attack Turkish Kurdish rebels. The military was not available for comment.

Turkish forces crossed into Iraq last month in the latest of several incursions during the past few years to destroy bases used by Turkish Kurd rebels, fighting for autonomy within Turkey.

(sh/djw)

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^Clashes between Kurdish factions escalate in northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with Turkish military shelling Patriotic Union positions in new 4th and 5th grafs, ADDS number of Turkish troops in northern Iraq in 6th graf<

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The Patriotic Union claimed Sunday that Turkish army guns joined the Democratic Party fighters in firing on its positions around Balak

It said it repulsed the Democratic Party guerrillas around Balak but suffered 10 injuries in the shelling. It also said that Turkish jets pounded its positions along a strategic highway which links Irbil, the area's main Kurdish city, to the Iranian border on Sunday.

Turkey has confirmed conducting air raids in northern Iraq over the past week, but said the raids were aimed at Turkish Kurdish guerrillas. The Turkish army also has some 8,000 troops in the area chasing the fighters.

On Saturday, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan accused Turkey of bombing its positions with napalm. Turkey has not commented on the claim.

Earlier in the day the Democratic Party said it recaptured the areas of Roli, Zini, Dergala and Serrevas, which were occupied by the Patriotic Union on Friday.

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Turkish forces crossed into Iraq last month in the latest of several incursions during the past few years to destroy bases used by Turkish Kurd rebels, fighting for autonomy within Turkey.

(sh/djw)

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^BC-Turkey-Northern Iraq(

^Turkey chasing rebels, finds itself enmeshed in Kurdish fighting(

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Intent on fighting its own Kurdish rebels, Turkey has found itself embroiled in the chaotic rivalries of northern Iraq's Kurdish population.

The two main Iraqi Kurdish groups resumed fighting this month after a year-long lull, and Turkey has been accused of going beyond its aim by bombing territories controlled by one of the factions.

Turkish jets on Sunday pounded several positions, dropping score of missiles, wounding 10 people and forcing thousands to flee, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of the two factions, said Monday.

Turkey has launched several cross-border incursions over the past few years to crush the autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurdish rebels, known as the PKK.

Turkey's military presence has taken a more permanent form in recent months.

In an effort to form a barrier against rebel incursions, Turkish troops apparently are trying to control a rugged strip of northern Iraq up to 15 kilometers wide along the countries' 330-kilometer (200-mile) border. The zone is manned by some 8,000 soldiers who remained from an incursion last May.

Last year, the United States withdrew its military coordination center from northern Iraq amid increased fighting between the two Iraqi Kurdish groups.

"The West has given up on the Kurds," said Prof. Dogu Ergil, a expert on Kurdish issues at Ankara University. "They gave them the chance to govern themselves, but (the Kurds) never took advantage of it, and continued to fight each other."

The buffer zone has received no criticism from the West, indicating that Turkey has received tacit approval from its allies.

U.S.-led warplanes still monitor a no-fly zone to keep Iraqi troops away from the region.

Baghdad lost control of the region after the Gulf War. The Western allies allowed the rival Kurdish groups to share power in the region, but by 1994, intense clashes and bickering over the distribution of revenues ended the arrangement.

Turkey's strategy also involved pulling one of the rival Iraqi Kurdish groups to its side.

Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party, which controls areas adjacent to the Turkish border, has been aiding the Turkish troops since September in offensives against the PKK.

The alliance helped Turkey to push the PKK into areas controlled by Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Talabani's forces and the PKK reportedly have been aiding each other.

Turkish planes have been bombing such positions for more than a week.

Although Turkey says the bombing spree is not aimed at Talabani's positions but targets the PKK, it draws Turkey deeper into the northern Iraqi conflict.

(sf-za/djw)

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[Cyprus]

AP VVV73 Aa ----- Turkey-Iraq-Kurds

10-24 4:46p

Iraqi Kurdish group says truce with rival faction is over

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - An Iraqi Kurdish group said Friday that it considered a week-long cease-fire in northern Iraq over because of attacks by Turkish jets and the forces of a rival group.

Shazad Saib, the Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said heavy fighting was taking place between the factions in the Rawanduz and Koysanjak regions, close to the Iranian border.

"The cease-fire ended with the Turkish air raids followed by attacks by the KDP," Saib told The Associated Press in reference to the rival group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The Patriotic Union said Thursday that four Turkish jets fired missiles and dropped incendiary bombs on its positions in several villages some 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the Turkish border.

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A Turkish newspaper on Friday claimed that Turkey raided the Patriotic Union to force it to retreat to positions it held before the new spate of fighting erupted.

Hurriyet newspaper said the move was a pre-emptive one, designed to prevent the Kurdistan Democratic Party from seeking help from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

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Last year, Saddam's army crossed the 36th parallel and joined forces with the Kurdistan Democratic Party against the rival group.

The zone north of the parallel, where the two factions used to share power, is protected by a U.S.-led force since the end of the Gulf War and it is barred to Saddam's troops.

Turkish forces have entered northern Iraq several times in the past few years to destroy the bases used by Turkish Kurdish rebels seeking autonomy in Turkey.

Officials said Friday said more than 2,500 rebels had been killed in northern Iraq since May.

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10-26 1:52a

Iraqi Kurd leader accuses Turkey of bombing his positions with napalm

Eds: RECASTS throughout with Talabani TV quotes, napalm allegation
CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - An Iraqi Kurd leader on Saturday accused Turkey of bombing his positions with napalm.

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The United States said Friday that despite cease-fire violations this week, the truce seemed to be holding.

Turkish forces crossed into Iraq last month in the latest of several incursions during the past few years to destroy bases used by Turkish Kurd separatists.

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AP VVV78 Aa ----- Iraq-UN, 2nd Ld

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^Opposition groups condemn Turkish ``security zone'' in Iraq<

^Eds: DELETES last graf to omit erroneous reference to PUK.<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Two Iraqi opposition groups on Tuesday condemned Turkey for establishing a buffer zone along its border with Iraq to deter Kurdish rebel incursions.

The Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said the zone violates Iraq's sovereignty.

The Kurdish newspaper Hurriyet said last week that 8,000 Turkish soldiers were in the zone along the 330-kilometer (221 miles)-long border between Turkey and Iraq.

``We consider the zone a foreign occupation and demand that the Turkish troops be withdrew immediately,'' said SCIRI, a mainly Shiite group, in a statement faxed to the Associated Press.

``The buffer zone is only a first step toward the full Turkish occupation of northern Iraq,'' the PUK said in a separate statement.

Turkey has launched several cross-border incursions over the past few years to crush the autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurdish rebels, known as the PKK. But the guerrillas have returned each time after the troops leave.

Iraqi Kurds established a de facto state in northern Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War, taking advantage of the power vacuum to set up bases there.

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^Turkey chasing rebels, finds itself enmeshed in Kurdish fighting(

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey, battling its own Kurdish rebels in northern Iraqi territory, has cut a deal with a Iraqi Kurdish group that may be enmeshing it in a feud between rival Kurdish factions.

The two main Iraqi Kurdish groups resumed fighting this month after a year-long lull. Turkey, which previously helped mediate peace between them, has formed a strategic alliance with one of the groups.

The move has political commentators wondering if Turkey's latest strategy in the 13-year old war against autonomy-seeking rebels could start backfiring.

"Turkey is being dragged into the blood feud between the Kurds of northern Iraq," said Mehmet Ali Birand, a columnist for the Sabah daily.

"We cannot abandon our fight against the (rebels), but we are sliding toward a quagmire."

Turkey won the help of Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party, which controls areas adjacent to the Turkish border, to crush an autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurdish rebel group, the PKK. Barzani's fighters have been aiding the troops since September.

The alliance helped Turkey to push the PKK into areas controlled by Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the rival faction.

The Patriotic Union accused Turkey of bombing several positions in its territory Sunday, dropping scores of missiles, wounding 10 people and forcing thousands to flee, the Patriotic Union said this week.

Turkey maintains the bombing is not aimed at the Iraqi Kurdish group but targets its autonomy-seeking rebels.

Turkey has made several cross-border incursions in the past few years trying to combat the PKK. PKK rebels use northern Iraqi border areas to stage attacks in southeastern Turkey.

The military apparently see the turmoil in northern Iraq as an opportunity to step up offensives against the rebels and make their presence there more permanent.

In an effort to form a barrier against rebel incursions, Turkish troops reportedly are trying to control a rugged, 9-mile strip of northern Iraq along the countries' 200-mile border.

About 8,000 Turkish soldiers have remained in the zone since a May incursion.

Baghdad lost control of northern Iraq after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and the U.S.-led warplanes still keep Iraqi troops away from the region.

The Western wartime allies allowed the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan to share power in the area, but intense clashes and bickering ended the arrangement by 1994.

Turkey justifies its incursions by contending the power vacuum there has allowed its rebels to move freely.

Although Turkey's Western allies in the past heavily criticized its incursions into the region, this time it has chosen to look the other way, withholding any criticism of the reported buffer zone.

"The West has given up on the Kurds," said Prof. Dogu Ergil, an expert on Kurdish issues at Ankara University. "They gave them the chance to govern themselves, but (the Kurds) never took advantage of it, and continued to fight each other."

"As long as there is not any massacre, they will let Turkey fight its rebels there," Ergil said.

(sf/djw)

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurdish group says Turkish jets pound positions(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group claimed Turkish jets resumed attacks on its positions Thursday using napalm and cluster bombs.

Shazad Saib, the Ankara-based spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said jets pounded an area near the town of Shaqlawa in the fifth attack by the air force in two weeks.

He said more than 25 civilians and 20 of Patriotic Union fighters have been killed in the bombings.

Turkey denies using napalm bombs and of attacking positions of the Patriotic Union, contending that the attacks are aimed only at autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurdish rebels.

The rebels maintain bases in northern Iraq from where they launch hit-and-run attacks in southeast Turkey. Turkey has sent troops chasing after the rebels several times in the past few years.

In its latest offensive which began in September, Turkey enlisted the help of a rival Iraqi Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party to combat the rebels, sending the rebels to territories controlled by the Patriotic Union.

Earlier this month, the two Kurdish groups agreed to a truce after a week of fighting that shattered a 12-month cease-fire.

But Saib said the two groups resumed fighting around Shaqlawa.

The two Kurdish factions have uneasily shared power in the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq, which has been under the protection of a U.S.-led force since Baghdad's forces crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

Some 28,000 people have died in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict since 1984.

(sf)

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds(

^Kurd groups: Hundreds killed in fierce fighting in northern Iraq(

^Eds: INCORPORATES BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds(

^By MAAMOUN YOUSSEF=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Rival Kurdish groups said they fought Thursday the fiercest battle in northern Iraq since a cease-fire collapsed two weeks ago. Casualty estimates ranged from 72 dead to hundreds killed or wounded.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said it repulsed a three-pronged attack by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, killing or wounding hundreds of its men. It said the KDP was aided by Turkish air raids and artillery shelling that killed more than 25 civilians and 20 PUK men.

The KDP, which acknowledged it launched the attack, said its guerrillas captured some PUK positions and killed more than 60 PUK fighters, including two high ranking military leaders.

In a statement received in Cairo, the KDP said only 12 of its men were killed and a number of others wounded.

There was no way of confirming the claims of casualties.

Both groups said the fighting took place around the strategic mountain of Beni Harir overlooking Khalifan town and a vital road linking the region's de facto capital, Irbil, with Iran.

A PUK statement faxed to The Associated Press said the battle lasted four hours in which "our forces heroically repulsed the attack and forced the attackers to retreat suffering hundreds of men killed or wounded."

The statement said the KDP left 17 bodies of their fighters on the battle field, including some military commanders. A large quantity of weapons and ammunition also was left behind, it said.

In Ankara, a PUK spokesman, Shazad Saib, said Turkish jets pounded an area near the town of Shaqlawa, 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of Irbil, in the fifth attack by the air force in two weeks.

Saib said more than 25 civilians and 20 of PUK fighters were killed in the bombardment comprising internationally-banned napalm and incendiary bombs.

Turkey denies using napalm bombs and of attacking PUK positions, contending that the attacks are aimed only at autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurd rebels who have set up bases in northern Iraq.

The PUK said the fighting which started at dawn was the fiercest since Oct. 13 when a one-year-old cease-fire collapsed. A subsequent truce has been violated several times.

The two Kurdish factions have uneasily shared power in the Kurdish zone, an autonomous region in northern Iraq that has been under the protection of a U.S.-led force since Baghdad forces crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

^my-vj(

[Baghdad]

AP VVV03 Aa ----- Iraq-Kurds

10-30 11:29p

Kurd groups: Hundreds killed in fierce fighting in northern Iraq

Eds: INCORPORATES BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds

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[Iran]

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Military chief's seeks rebel

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^Iraqi Kurdish group says it launches attack on rival in northern Iraq(

^Eds: UPDATES with Turkish artillery and air bombardment in 10th graf, PUK claims of repulsing attacks by rival group in 7th and 8th grafs, CLARIFIES casualty figure in 4th graf refers to the past two days, ADDS byline(

^By SELCAN HACAOGLU=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said it launched a three-pronged attack against a rival faction in northern Iraq early Saturday, but its rival claimed it repulsed the attacks.

"Our forces are proceeding with great success," Fair Nerweyi a spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, told The Associated Press here in announcing the offensive.

The attacks come after several days of fighting in the Kurdish autonomous zone, which has been under the protection of a U.S.-led force since Iraqi government forces crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

More than 50 Kurdish guerrillas have been killed in earlier clashes on Thursday and Friday, the Kurdistan Democratic Party said.

The group said its offensive Saturday against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK, stretched from Degalah, east of main Kurdish city Irbil, to Shaqlawa, further north.

"Our target is to push PUK behind the cease-fire line," Nerweyi said in reference to a U.S.-brokered ceasefire line.

But the rival group Patriotic Union claimed that it repulsed the attacks south of Shaqlawa.

"Democratic Party fighters had to retreat towards Hiran; further north," Shazad Saib, representative of Patriotic Union told The AP.

The two groups, who have uneasily shared control of the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq since 1991, resumed fighting in October after observing the U.S.-brokered cease-fire for 12 months.

Saib also claimed that Turkish jets and artillery units shelled their positions in the south of Shaqlawa on Saturday. He did not give any casualty figure.

Turkish military officials were not available for comment on the claim.

Earlier in the day Saib claimed a number of civilians were killed on Friday as a result of Turkish shelling in the town of Kuysanjaq, south of Degalah.

Foreign ministry spokesman Necati Utkan said earlier Saturday that Turkish troops, stationed in the area, and air force have been conducting operations since mid-December against Turkish Kurdish rebels who took shelter in areas controlled by the Patriotic Union.

Patriotic Union and Turkish Kurdish rebels formed an alliance earlier this year when the KDP began supporting Turkish forces in cross-border operations against the separatist Turkish Kurdish guerrillas, who have bases in northern Iraq.

Turkey has established a buffer zone in northern Iraq to keep Turkish Kurdish rebels away from its borders.

Meanwhile, in operations within Turkey, Turkish troops killed 22 Turkish Kurdish rebels in the southeast, the regional governor's office said. It was not clear when the clashes took place.

The report could not be verified independently. One soldier also was reported to have been killed.

(sh/djw)

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^*233 87 ank rom romp cai int mlnj<

^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds<

^Some 100 killed in escalating clashes in northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Fighting between two rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq escalated Sunday, with unconfirmed reports of casualties reaching 97.

Fighting resumed with dawn Sunday near the strategic town of Degala, a spokesman for one of the groups said. Both sides were using heavy artillery, Shazad Saib of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said. Degala lies 30 kilometers (20 miles) southeast of the regional capital, Irbil.

Saib repeated his group's claims that Turkish jets were bombing their positions, in support of the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The Party's radio, monitored by Anatolia News Agency, said 67 Union fighters were killed in recent fighting at several fronts. The Union's radio station, also monitored by Anatolia, said 30 rival guerrillas were killed.

Saib said Turkish tanks were south of Irbil, providing artillery backup to the Party.

"This is the deepest incursion ever by the Turkish military into Iraqi Kurdistan," Saib said. Irbil is 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of the Turkish border.

Thousands of Turkish troops, backed by tanks and air power, have carried out large-scale operations in northern Iraq in the last few years against Turkish Kurdish rebels who have bases there. But none of the past incursions exceeded 50 kilometers (30 miles).

Military officials were not available for comment.

Turkey has recently announced it will maintain a regular troop presence in the Kurdish enclave, which has been under the protection of a U.S.-led air force keeping Baghdad away since the Gulf War.

Mediation efforts by the United States, England and Turkey over the years between the rival Kurds have not been successful.

Meanwhile, in southeastern Turkey, Kurdish rebels killed five villagers and a pro-government militia Saturday night near the town of Siirt, Anatolia reported. In clashes near Sirnak, near the Iraqi border, 15 rebels were killed, it added.

(yo/cph)

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq Kurds(

^Report: Turkey strengthens forces in northern Iraq with
paratroopers(

^By SELCAN HACAOGLU=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey has dropped paratroopers in an area
close to Iran to reinforce its forces in northern Iraq, an Iraqi
Kurdish group claimed Monday.

The paratroopers were dropped on Mt. Sari Hassan Beg, a few
kilometers (miles) from Iran soon after Turkish jets and tanks
pounded positions of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan on Sunday, the
group said in a statement.

Maj. Tolga Kose, a spokesman for the Turkish General Staff, would
not comment.

"Turkish aerial bombardment was concentrated in Qasri village
this morning," Shazad Saib, a spokesman for Patriotic Union told
The Associated Press on Monday.

A London-based Kurdish television station, MED, said Monday that
tens of civilians were killed in Turkish bombardment on Sunday and
Monday.

Turkey has been saying that the air assaults were aimed at
Turkish Kurdish rebels who hide in areas controlled by the Patriotic
Union.

Meanwhile another Iraqi Kurdish group, Kurdistan Democratic
Party, which has been fighting with Patriotic Union for the control
of the region, said it recaptured several areas it lost in recent
clashes.

"We got control of Sidekan and Choman towns and Qasri," Faik
Nerweyi, a spokesman for the Democratic Party told the AP. "The
Patriotic Union and Turkish rebels are retreating in disarray
towards the border post of Haj Umran," near Iran.

The Patriotic Union acknowledged the retreat, Turkey's Anatolia
news agency said, quoting the group's radio.

The two Iraqi Kurdish groups, which have uneasily shared power in
northern Iraq since 1991, resumed fighting Oct. 12, shattering a
U.S.-brokered cease-fire that had lasted for 12 months.

Turkish troops are reportedly supporting the Democratic Party
against an alleged collaboration between Patriotic Union and Turkish
Kurdish guerrillas, who have been fighting for autonomy within
Turkey.

Turkey has recently established a buffer zone along its border
inside Iraq to prevent the infiltration by Turkish Kurdish rebels
which stage hit-and-run attacks from their bases in northern Iraq.

The war between Turkish troops and Kurdish rebels has claimed
28,000 lives since 1984.

(sh/djw)

AP-LD-11-17-97 1534GMT(

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurdish group accuses Turkey of pushing on with attacks(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — An Iraqi Kurdish group on Thursday accused Turkey of launching new ground and air attacks against its positions in northern Iraq, in areas beyond an internationally-brokered demarcation line.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said it had pulled back beyond cease-fire line after recent joint onslaughts by Turkish troops and its rival faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

“Despite assertions by the government of Turkey that its military intervention was limited to pushing the PUK back to the demarcated cease-fire lines, the combined forces... continue to attack,” the group said in statement faxed to The Associated Press.

It said Turkish artillery and airforce attacked positions southeast of Rawanduz, near the Iranian border.

Turkish foreign ministry spokesman Haldun Otman said Turkey had asked the group to withdraw back to the demarcation lines, but denied any attacks on the group. Turkish offensives were limited to autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurdish rebels, he said.

The Democratic Party also denied the report.

“For us the fighting is over,” said Faik Nerweyi, an Ankara-based party spokesman.

Turkey, chasing rebels in northern Iraq, has reportedly sided with the Democratic Party in the fight for control of the Kurdish autonomous zone, after the Patriotic Union gave refuge to the guerrillas in areas under its control.

The cease-fire line between the two Iraqi Kurdish groups was arranged by U.S., British and Turkish mediators last year. But the rival factions resumed fighting Oct. 12, shattering the year-old agreement.

Turkey has recently established a buffer zone along its border inside Iraq to prevent the infiltration by Turkish Kurdish rebels which stage hit-and-run attacks from their bases in northern Iraq.

Northern Iraq is under the protection of a U.S. -led force since Baghdad government forces crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

(sf-fd)

AP-LD-11-20-97 1057GMT(

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurdish group claims it defeated rival(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said it called off its attacks on a rival group on Monday because it has regained areas captured by its rival in recent fighting, the group said.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, of KDP, said it ``decided to halt military activities as of 1000 GMT Monday against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan to give peace efforts a chance to succeed.''

The two Iraqi Kurdish groups, which have shared power in northern Iraq since 1991, resumed fighting Oct. 12, shattering a U.S.-brokered cease-fire that had lasted for 12 months.

``We demand that the Patriotic Union ... accept the peace process in the interest of the Kurdish people and that of its own,' ' the KDP said, adding it would nevertheless defend itself if attacked by the Patriotic Union or by their Turkish Kurdish rebel allies.

The KDP recently claimed victory in clashes which reportedly claimed hundreds of lives.

(sh-fd)

AP-LD-11-24-97 1832GMT(

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u i BC-Turkey-IraqKurds 11-25 0255

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurdish groups agree to observe ceasefire(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group said Tuesday it would go along with a cease-fire declared by its rival a day earlier.

"We are looking forward to efforts to find a genuine, lasting peace," Shazad Saib, Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told The Associated Press.

Its bitter rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, announced a halt of military activity on Monday after regaining areas captured by the Patriotic Union in recent fighting.

The two Iraqi Kurdish groups, which have shared power in northern Iraq since 1991, had resumed fighting Oct. 12, shattering a 12 month-long cease-fire that had been mediated jointly by the United States, Britain and Turkey.

But Saib said the Patriotic Union, which has accused the Turkish military of bombing its positions, said it no longer wanted Ankara to be part of the mediation efforts.

"Turkey is a part of the fight, not part of peace," Saib said.

Turkey, chasing its own rebels in northern Iraq, has reportedly sided with the Democratic Party in the fight for control of the Kurdish autonomous zone, after the Patriotic Union gave refuge to the guerrillas in areas under its control.

Turkish officials have denied that attacks targeted the group, saying offensives were limited to autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurdish rebels. The rebels maintain bases in northern Iraq to launch hit-and-run attacks against Turkey.

(sf-fd)

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^Mild quake shakes northern Iraq, causes panic in Turkey(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A mild earthquake jolted northern Iraq early Tuesday and caused panic in Turkey, the Anatolia news agency said. No damage or injuries were reported.

The quake struck the Iraqi border town of Zakhu at 5.16 a.m. (0316 GMT), and had a preliminary magnitude of 4.5, the Istanbul-based Kandilli observatory said.

Zakhu lies just across the Turkish border crossing of Habur.

The quake sent residents into the streets in Turkey's Uludere border town, where it was also felt, Anatolia said.

Turkey's entire eastern region straddles the Anatolian fault, an earthquake-prone belt.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq-Kurds(

^Turkish jets bomb Kurdish rebel camps in northern Iraq(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkish warplanes on Monday bombed camps maintained by rebel Kurds along the Iranian border in northern Iraq, Turkey's semi-official news agency.

Turkish ground troops also attacked rebel positions on the snow-covered Kel Mehmet and Cudi mountains, near the Turkish border, the agency said.

Military officials were not available for comment and no casualty figures were released for the latest two-week old offensive against Turkish Kurds based in Iraq.

About 20,000 Turkish soldiers and 8,000 fighters of an allied Iraqi group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, are taking part in the offensive, one of many cross-border raids over the last two years.

The rebels have fought since 1984 for autonomy in southeastern Turkey. The war has killed about 28,000 people.

Meanwhile, at least nine people were killed, and 10 others were injured Monday in southeast Turkey when a minivan hit a land mine believed to have been laid by the rebels.

Both the rebels and Turkish troops mine roads in their conflict.
(sf)

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^Turkish army claims killing 182 Kurdish rebels in Iraq(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkish armed forces have killed 182 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq over the past 10 days, the general staff claimed on Tuesday.

About 20,000 Turkish soldiers, backed by helicopter gunships, jets and armored units have been attacking rebel bases in the area since Dec. 5.

Some 8,000 fighters of an allied Iraqi Kurd group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, were also supporting the Turkish soldiers in the operation in areas close to Iranian border.

According to the general staff no soldiers were killed or injured in the operation which ended on Monday.

The report could not be verified independently.

Turkey has established a buffer zone inside Iraq and stationed thousands of troops along the Iraqi-Turkish border to keep the rebels away from Turkey.

It was not clear if the troops when the troops would return to Turkey.

The general staff said the troops have inflicted great losses on the Kurdish rebels by seizing tons of food and hundreds of weapons from guerrilla shelters before winter.

The guerrillas, fighting for autonomy in Turkey's southeast, stage hit and run attacks from their bases in northern Iraq.

The war has killed about 28,000 people since 1984.

(sh-fd)

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^Turkish Parliament extends mandate of U.S.-led force protecting Kurds(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Parliament on Thursday extended the mandate of a U.S.-led allied force protecting Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq from the forces of President Saddam Hussein.

By a show of hands, deputies extended through June 30 the term of Operation Northern Watch, which is enforcing a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq. Iraqi Kurds maintain a de facto autonomous state in northern Iraq under the mission's protection.

The operation's mandate has been renewed every six months since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

"Peace and stability in northern Iraq has not yet been achieved," said State Minister Yucel Seckiner in a speech to Parliament seeking support for the extension.

More than 45 U.S. and British planes and 1,400 personnel are part of the mission, which is based at the southern Turkish airbase of Incirlik.

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^Turkish Parliament extends mandate of U.S.-led force protecting Kurds<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey's Parliament has extended the mandate of a U.S.-led allied force protecting Kurds in northern Iraq from the forces of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

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Iraqi Kurds maintain a de facto autonomous state in northern Iraq under the mission's protection. The operation's mandate has been renewed every six months since the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

More than 45 U.S. and British planes and 1,400 personnel are part of the mission.

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey{

^Iraq condemns Turkish extension of mandate for allies{

^By WAIEL FALEH=

^Associated Press Writer=

Baghdad, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq on Friday criticized Turkey's extension of the mandate of U.S.-led allied forces protecting Kurds in northern Iraq as an "act of aggression" against Iraq.

The Turkish Parliament on Thursday extended through June 30 the term of Operation Northern Watch, which is enforcing a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq. Iraqi Kurds maintain a de facto autonomous state in northern Iraq under the mission's protection.

The operation's mandate has been renewed every six months since the end of the 1991 Gulf War and is aimed at protecting the Kurds from the forces of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"The six-month extension of the aggression forces of the United States and Britain is an act of aggression by itself against Iraq," the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said in a statement late Thursday.

"Iraq holds the Turkish government fully responsible for its irresponsible policy which inflicts dangerous damage on Iraq's sovereignty and security," said the statement which was carried by the Iraqi News Agency on Friday.

"We express our condemnation of the Turkish decision. We advise the Turkish government and Parliament members, who voted for the decision, to reconsider their irresponsible political stands toward relations with Iraq and to understand that plots against Iraq will not solve the Kurdish problem."

More than 45 U.S. and British planes and 1,400 personnel are part of the mission, which is based at the southern Turkish airbase of Incirlik.

Iraqi newspapers on Friday also attacked Turkey's decision to extend the mandate.

"Most Turks know that the presence of these forces is against Turkish interests and security as well as Iraq's, but they insist on sacrificing Turkish interests in the region. This decision shows the extent of pressure exerted on the Parliament members," state-run al-Thawra daily said in an editorial.

"By extending the mandate, the Turks make the job of the aggressors easier and make the lives of Iraq's Kurds harder," said the al-Iraq daily.

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^Iraq condemns Turkish extension of mandate for allies(<

^Eds: INCORPORATES Turkey-Iraq-Kurds(<

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^BC-Iraq-Turkey(

^Iraq condemns Turkish attacks along its northern border(

BAGHDAD, IRAQ (AP) _ Iraq has condemned Turkey for a new military foray into northern Iraq and called for an immediate withdrawal of troops, the government-run newspaper al-Jumhuriya reported Saturday.

Turkey has mounted a "fresh military aggression" against Iraq, using infantry and warplanes, the paper said.

Iraq "strongly condemns" the operation, al-Jumhuriya said. Turkey should "withdraw its troops immediately and stop carrying out practices which run contrary to the principles of international law."

In Ankara, a Turkish defense ministry official confirmed to The Associated Press that "an operation has been under way in northern Iraq over the past few days."

The official refused to give details, but added: "Turkey respects Iraq's territorial integrity, but cannot allow terrorists to attack it from Iraq."

Turkey has been conducting search-and-destroy missions against guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK for the past few months in northern Iraq.

The Turkish newspaper Zaman reported Saturday that Turkish warplanes had bombed PKK camps Friday in northern Iraq, but it gave no casualty figures.

The Iraqi newspaper quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying the instability in southeastern Turkey was partly due to Ankara's allowing the U.S.-led allied forces to continue their air-cover protection of Kurds in northern Iraq.

On Friday Iraq criticized Turkey's extension of the mandate of the U.S.-led force policing the no-fly zone. A Kurdish autonomous zone was created in northern Iraq after Baghdad government forces put down a Kurdish revolt there after the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait.

The Turkish Parliament on Thursday extended through June 30 the term of Operation Northern Watch, which is providing air-cover for the zone.

Al-Jumhuriya said the no-fly zone has created a power vacuum that allowed the PKK rebels to use the area as a springboard for attacks in Turkey's southeast.

Iraqi Kurdish rebels of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Massoud Barzani, are reported to be aiding Turkish troops against the PKK.

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^Turkey says troops helping Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Turkey's latest military drive in northern Iraq was to aide Iraqi Kurds battling autonomy-seeking Turkish Kurdish rebels, its foreign ministry said Monday.

Spokesman Necati Utkan told reporters the Iraqi Kurdish group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, had organized an attack on Turkish Kurdish rebel bases.

''The Turkish security forces provided support for this operation,'' Utkan said. ''The operation is limited in scope and duration. The operation may have already ended.''

Turkish forces have conducted several offensives against the guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party in northern Iraq over the past few months, some of them in alliance with the Kurdistan Democratic Party which controls regions along the Turkish border.

Turkey has also set up a buffer zone along the border, and has left an unspecified number of troops in the region since May.

Iraq called this latest intervention an aggression and demanded an immediate withdrawal of troops.

Utkan said the latest offensive took place on Gara mountain, close to the Iraqi-Turkish border, but would not give any further details.

The guerrillas use bases in northern Iraq to launch attacks on Turkish targets.

A Kurdish autonomous zone was created in northern Iraq after Baghdad government forces put down a Kurdish revolt there after the 1991 Gulf War.

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^Iraqi Kurdish group proposes peace to rival faction(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ An Iranian-supported Kurdish group is offering to end hostilities with its main rival in northern Iraq, the organization said Friday.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, offered to make peace with rival Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in a letter Wednesday. The offer was broadcast Friday on PUK radio and monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp. in London.

"The PUK extends to you ... a hand of brotherhood and reconciliation with the aim of reaching general reconciliation," the radio quoted Talabani as saying in his letter.

The rival Kurdish groups have controlled northern Iraq with the backing of the United States, Britain and France since shortly after the 1991 Gulf War. The two, however, have fought bitterly. Iran has supported the PUK while Iraq has helped the KDP.

The letter called for reunifying the regional government, reconstituting a unified Cabinet in which all Kurdish factions are represented and ultimately, free elections for a Kurdish parliament in northern Iraq.

A similar proposal made by the PUK and its allies in June was rejected by the KDP.

The United States, Britain and France established a protected area for Kurds in northern Iraq after Baghdad crushed a Kurdish rebellion following the 1991 Gulf War. Iraq has sought to re-exert its influence over the Kurdish enclave.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds(

^Iraq says deportation of Kurds from Kirkuk legal(

^By LEON BARKHO=

^Associated Press Writer=

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) _ Iraq admitted Sunday that it had expelled a number of Kurdish families from the northern city of Kirkuk but said the action was in line with Iraqi laws.

The official Al-Qadissiya newspaper said several Kurdish families had emigrated to the oil-rich Kirkuk province "in violation of measures organizing the movement of people between Iraqi provinces" and that Iraqi authorities sent them to Irbil, which is part of the Kurdish autonomous area.

The newspaper was responding to reports in Western media that accused Iraqi authorities of evicting about 100 Kurdish families from Kirkuk, which is under Iraqi government control.

Kirkuk is 240 kilometers (145 miles) north of the capital Baghdad, and Irbil is 85 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Kirkuk.

Latif Rashid, the London spokesman of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told The Associated Press in an interview last month that the deportation was part of a campaign to "Arabize" Kirkuk.

The PUK's radio said the families had moved to Chamchamal, a town in the Kurdish autonomous zone that is 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Kirkuk.

The families have been housed in a school and sports stadium in Chamchamal, the radio said.

Iraqi Kurds say the forced resettlement of Kurds from the government-run sector is part of a campaign to "Arabize" the city of Kirkuk, which has a Kurdish majority.

But Al-Thawra, the paper of the ruling Baath party, quoted an unnamed Interior Ministry official as saying that "the transfer of people from one province to another is governed by well-defined laws and instructions, and is not carried out arbitrarily."

Al-Thawra justified the action by saying that most countries in the world organize the movement of people from one area to another.

The Iranian-backed PUK and its rival, the Baghdad-supported Kurdistan Democratic Party, have uneasily shared control of the autonomous zone since it was set up by the United States, Britain and France after Iraqi forces put down a Kurdish uprising following the 1991 Gulf War.

The Iraqi Kurds, who have historically dominated the north of the country, number about 3.5 million people.

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^Britain's Cook's remarks strains relations with Turkey(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ In a step likely to aggravate Turkey's tense relations with the European Union, Ankara has asked Britain for clarification over remarks by the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook questioning Turkey's borders, the foreign ministry said Wednesday.

In a Jan. 4 interview with BBC television's "Breakfast with Frost" program, Cook said: "There are a lot of very serious reasons why Turkey is not now, and will not be for the foreseeable future, a credible candidate: its record on human rights, the fact that its eastern border is not one that's very clear."

"The ministry made its disappointment be known to the British ambassador," Foreign Ministry spokesman Necati Utkan told reporters.

A transcript of the interview was made available to reporters by the Turkish foreign ministry.

A British embassy official said Cook was referring to cross-border offensives against Turkish Kurdish rebel hideouts in northern Iraq. "He did not mean that Turkey's border's were questionable," an official said on condition of anonymity.

Turkey has been waging a 13-year old war against autonomy seeking Kurds and has sent troops across border in pursuit of the rebels. Turkey has also established a buffer zone along the border in northern Iraq to prevent rebel infiltration.

Last month, in a move that angered Turkey, the EU excluded the country from a list of candidates it intends to start membership negotiations with, citing human rights problems, the occupation of Cyprus and disputes with EU-member Greece.

Britain currently holds the EU presidency.

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^BC-Turkey-Iraq Kurds(

^Iraqi Kurdish group holds reconciliation talks in Turkey(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group on Tuesday held talks with Turkish officials in an effort to overcome differences after it accused Turkey of launching several air raids on its positions.

But reconciliation seemed far from imminent.

"We are not the ones responsible for the break down of peace talks," said Barham Saleh, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's Washington representative who led the Iraqi Kurdish delegation.

The group criticized Turkey in November for forming an alliance with a rival faction during one of several cross-border incursions into northern Iraq and held Turkey responsible for the failure of joint Turkish, British, and U.S. negotiations for peace between the warring groups.

Turkey has denied attacking the group, saying its raids were limited to its own autonomy-seeking Kurdish rebels who maintain bases in northern Iraq. It accused the Patriotic Union of giving refuge to guerrillas in areas under its control.

The rival Iraqi Kurdish factions resumed fighting Oct. 12, shattering a year-old agreement brokered by the allies.

Northern Iraq is under the protection of a U.S. -led force since Baghdad government forces crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

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^Iraqi Kurdish leader offers peace to rival(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ The leader of an Iraqi Kurdish faction said Saturday that he was ready to end a dispute with his main rival that has left hundreds of guerrillas dead in two years of fighting.

But the terms that Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, set are unlikely to be acceptable to his rival, Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Last month, Talabani suggested that the two parties, which dominate the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, should share political power.

The two Kurdish factions have contested for supremacy in northern Iraq, an area that has been under the protection of U.S.-led forces since Iraq crushed a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

In his response, Barzani said in a letter to Talabani that "the road of progress for Kurdistan passes through, reconciliation, brotherhood and peace."

But he said that while he was ready to allow the PUK to engage in political activities in areas under his control, he would not accept the group's militia.

He also said that he would not give back any land captured in recent fighting and would not share revenues from border crossing points.

He also demanded that the PUK expel Turkish Kurdish fighters from the area under its control and improve its ties with Turkey.

The PUK has rejected such demands in the past.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^Rival Kurdish parties agree to maintain ceasefire<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Two rival Kurdish groups met in northern Iraq Thursday for first the time since a December ceasefire and agreed to keep the truce intact.

Representatives of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party also agreed to an unconditional release of all prisoners to consolidate their peace.

There is no exact number of prisoners being held by either side.

"The two parties agreed to maintain the ceasefire and to resort to dialogue in solving problems," said a joint statement faxed to The Associated Press in Cairo.

The two sides also agreed to cease propaganda campaigns against each other and "build mutual confidence between the two parties to make the peace process succeed," the statement said.

Last month, PUK leader Jalal Talabani offered to make peace with rival KDP leader Massoud Barzani.

The rival Kurdish groups have controlled northern Iraq with the backing of the United States, Britain and France since shortly after the 1991 Gulf War. The two, however, have fought bitterly. Iran has supported the PUK while Iraq has helped the KDP.

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^Iraqi Kurds agree to exchange prisoners(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Two rival Kurdish factions controlling parts of northern Iraq have decided to exchange prisoners and set up joint panels to deal with humanitarian work, one of the groups reported.

The decision was announced after a meeting Thursday between representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, KDP radio reported Thursday. The broadcast was monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp. and reported Tuesday.

It said the delegations exchanged lists with names of prisoners to be swapped next week, and also formed three joint committees to deal with the U.N. oil-for-food program, electricity, trade and travel, and other services such as health, education and energy.

The oil-for-food program allows Iraq to sell limited amounts of oil _ an exception to the U.N. embargo imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait _ to buy food and medicine for its people, including those living in areas controlled by the PUK and KDP.

KDP radio said the meeting, the second this month, was held at the PUK headquarters in the northern Iraqi town of Kuya.

The rival Kurdish groups have controlled northern Iraq with the support of the United States, Britain and France since shortly after the 1991 Gulf War. But the two groups have fought each other for total control, with Iran supporting the PUK and President Saddam Hussein's regime helping the KDP.

The two sides will meet again in the KDP held town of Shaqlawa, the radio said without giving details.

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^Iraqi Kurds agree to exchange prisoners<

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^BC-Egypt-Iraq-Kurds

^Iraq protests to Egypt over Arab-Kurdish dialogue in Cairo

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Iraq has protested to Egypt over an Arab-Kurdish dialogue that Egypt plans to host next week.

Iraq, in an official letter, described the discussions to be conducted with leaders of the two main Kurdish groups that control northern Iraq as "negative and unsuitable," said Arab diplomats in Cairo, speaking on condition of anonymity.

It asked Egypt to cancel the two-day meeting, which starts on Wednesday, they said.

Ahmed Hamroush, the head of the official Egyptian Solidarity Organization, which is hosting the meeting, rejected the Iraqi protest, the London-based Al-Hayat newspaper reported. He described the Iraqi letter as a "misperception."

It quoted him as saying that the dialogue is aimed only at improving ties and understanding between Arabs and Kurds.

Egypt allowed the two groups _ the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party _ to open offices in Cairo last year.

Adnan al-Mufti, the PUK representative to the discussions, said that the Iraqi rejection was short-sighted because "the Kurds only want to inform Arabs" about the situation in northern Iraq.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Kurdish leaders urge Saddam to give Kurds broader autonomy(

^BY SALAH NASRAWI=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Leaders of the two rival Kurdish groups that control northern Iraq Tuesday called on Saddam Hussein's government to give the region broader autonomy if it wants to end a separatist movement there.

The leaders who are in Cairo for an Arab-Kurdish dialogue also urged Arab countries to support their demand for a federal Kurdish entity.

"Our people have chosen the federal system and we believe that this is the only sound approach to maintain Iraq's national unity," Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told the gathering.

His arch rival, Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, did not attend the discussions but in a letter read out at the meeting, said "federalism is an ultimate objective for the Iraqi Kurds."

It was the first time the two rivals have made a demand for autonomy in a collective way, and in such a high-profile forum.

The meeting was also remarkable for setting up the first face-to-face encounter between top leaders of the groups, which have battled for control of the mountainous Kurdish region for the last seven years.

Saddam's forces lost control of the area after the 1991 Gulf War when the United States, Britain and France helped the Kurds to establish an autonomous region, but only to see the region torn by internecine fighting.

The rival leaders are expected to discuss their conflict later during the two-day meeting in Cairo.

Iraq has protested to Egypt about the conference, describing it as "negative and unsuitable." But Egypt turned down Iraq's request to cancel the meeting, which is also being attended by exiled Iraqi activists.

Ahmed Hamroush, the head of the official Egyptian Solidarity Organization, which is hosting the meeting said the discussions were aimed only at helping Saddam's government and the Kurds achieve a peaceful settlement to the problem.

"There is only one solution ... which should be based on democracy, and respect of human rights," he told the gathering.

In 1991, the local Kurdish parliament voted for a federation as the only possible link with Iraq. Saddam rejected the federation and insisted that the Kurds should accept a 1970 limited autonomy rule he offered to them.

Both Russia and France are mediating between Baghdad and the rival Kurdish groups.

Egypt allowed the two groups to open offices in Cairo last year.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Report: Iraq allows PKK to open offices in Baghdad(

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Iraq has allowed a Turkish Kurdish rebel group regarded by U.S. officials as a terrorist organization to open offices in Baghdad, an Arabic newspaper reported Sunday.

The London-based Al-Hayat, quoting Kurdish sources in northern Iraq, also said that Iraq has started providing the Kurdistan Workers Party with weapons and logistical support.

It said two other offices for the PKK, which is fighting for autonomy from Turkey, were opened in the northern cities of Mosul and Kirkuk, which are under Baghdad's control.

Iraq also urged the two Iraqi Kurdish groups controlling the north, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, to allow the PKK to operate in their areas bordering Turkey.

Al-Hayat's report was confirmed by Kurdish officials in northern Iraq. If true, the move could bolster the group's campaign against the Turkish army, which started in 1984.

Both Syria and Iran, which border Turkey, are believed to provide the PKK with similar facilities.

The PKK has in the past taken refuge in northern Iraq, and Turkish troops have crossed over into northern Iraq several times in the last few years to fight the Kurds.

Last month, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reported that Iraq agreed to grant asylum to 6,800 Turkish Kurdish refugees stranded on the line dividing government-held areas from regions controlled by Iraqi Kurds in the north.

The United States and many European countries consider the PKK a terrorist organization.

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^Turkey extends mandate of U.S.-led force protecting Iraqi Kurds(

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Parliament on Tuesday extended the mandate of a U.S.-led allied force protecting Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq from the forces of President Saddam Hussein.

By a show of hands, deputies extended through Dec. 30 the term of Operation Northern Watch, which is enforcing a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq. Iraqi Kurds maintain a de facto autonomous state in northern Iraq under the mission's protection.

The vote came hours after a U.S. plane, conducting Operation Southern Watch from Saudi Arabia, fired a missile at an Iraqi surface-to-air missile battery in southern Iraq after Iraqi radar locked on four British patrol planes.

Northern Watch's mandate has been renewed every six months since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

State Minister Yucel Seckiner told deputies that there was no indication that region was more stable, making it necessary for the operation to continue.

More than 45 U.S. and British planes and 1,400 personnel are part of the mission, which is based at the Incirlik air base, near the southern Turkish city of Adana.

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^BC-US-Iraq-Kurds

^Kurds say top U.S. officials to go to north Iraq for peace talks

CAIRO Egypt (AP) - Top U.S. diplomats will travel to northern Iraq next week to try to broker a settlement between the two main Kurdish groups, Kurdish officials said here Saturday.

A team led by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Walsh will meet separately with Massoud Barzani, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, and Jalal Talabani, the head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the officials said.

The U.S. team will try to set up direct negotiations between Barzani and Talabani, whose groups have maintained a fragile cease-fire since May 1997 in their long conflict to control the Kurdish autonomous zone of north Iraq.

"The aim of the visit is to give a new push to the Kurdish reconciliation attempts," Adnan al-Mufti, the PUK representative in Cairo, said.

A KDP spokesman in London said Walsh's team will arrive in the Kurdish zone on July 17 and Barzani will meet it at his office in Salah al-din.

Walsh will be accompanied by Bob Deutsch, the state department's regional office director. The Americans are expected to be accompanied by Turkish diplomats.

The rival groups have been meeting along the buffer line that separates their forces in the zone to discuss ways to enhance their cease-fire. But their talks have been hampered by differences on sharing the revenue of taxes levied on goods smuggled into north Iraq from neighboring countries.

The U.S. mission follows a decision by Washington earlier this year to provide help to Iraqi dissident groups trying to topple President Saddam Hussein. The United States, Turkey, and Britain have been mediating between the two groups since their hostilities ended.

The western allies set up the Kurdish zone in 1991 after Baghdad forces severely crushed a Kurdish rebellion that broke out in north Iraq at the end of the Gulf War. The Iraqi government accuses the allies of helping the Kurds to stay out of its control.

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^BC-Kurds-US

^Rival Kurdish leaders accept invitations for U.S. talks<

^By TAREK EL-TABLAWY=

^Associated Press Writer=

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ The leaders of two rival Kurdish factions have accepted invitations from an American envoy for talks in the United States, representatives of the factions said Monday.

The invitations were extended by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Welsh, who has been in the region in the past week trying to broker a settlement between the two groups, they said.

It was unclear, however, if joint talks were envisioned.

A London-based official with the Kurdistan Democratic Party, headed by Massoud Barzani, said Welsh held talks Sunday with Barzani in northern Iraq.

Welsh, who also met with Barzani on Friday, extended an invitation to the faction leader for talks in the United States, which he accepted, the KDP said in a faxed statement.

It said Barzani agreed to go "at the appropriate time," but gave no specific date.

A similar invitation was given by Welsh to Jalal Talabani, leader of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, who agreed to "go at a time that is mutually convenient," a PUK official in Washington told The Associated Press.

Both faction officials spoke on condition their names not be used.

U.S. officials say the Welsh team _ along with officials from the Turkish Foreign Ministry _ has been trying to set up direct negotiations between Barzani and Talabani, whose groups have maintained a fragile cease-fire since May 1997 in their long conflict to control the Kurdish zone in northern Iraq.

The factions have been holding peace talks along the line that separates their forces in the zone. But the negotiations have been hampered by differences over relations with the Baghdad government and over the sharing of revenue from "taxes" levied on goods smuggled into northern Iraq.

The Western allies set up the Kurdish zone in 1991 after Baghdad forces crushed a Kurdish rebellion that broke out at the end of the Gulf War. The Iraqi government accuses the allies of violating the country's sovereignty.

The talks in northern Iraq followed reports that U.S. President Bill Clinton has asked Congress to approve the funding of covert operations against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

On Friday, Clinton administration officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed a report in The Wall Street Journal that Clinton was seeking broad authority from Congress to try to topple Saddam.

Talabani visited Washington in July 1997 for talks with Clinton administration officials on ways to end fighting between the rival Kurdish groups.

That was the first high-level meeting between a Kurdish leader and administration officials following August 1996 fighting in which Barzani's forces, with the help of the Iraqi Army, drove Talabani's men out of some northern strongholds.

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^Rival Iraqi Kurdish groups agree to establish autonomous government<

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Rival Iraqi Kurdish groups have agreed to establish an autonomous government in the region, said a Spanish deputy on Monday just back from visiting Northern Iraq.

Pedro Marset, a deputy of Spain's third biggest parliamentary group, United Left, said both sides, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or KDP, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, will be ready to sign the agreement in Washington on Sept. 18-19.

"They have agreed to sign an agreement that will give the Kurds a democratic autonomous region," said Marset, who traveled on Aug. 23 to 29 to Kurdish autonomous zone of northern Iraq and Damask, Syria, as part of a delegation of United Left politicians invited by Irak's Communist Party.

The two Iraqi Kurdish parties have wrestled for control of the autonomous zone since the western allies created it after the Iraqi government suppressed a Kurdish revolt in 1991.

Recently their executives have tried to push forward a U.S.-brokered cease-fire signed in May 1997.

According to Marset, the agreement allows for elections to choose the representatives of the autonomous institutions of the region, of which the United States and Great Britain keep an aerial mission that prevents any attack of Iraqi troops of president Saddam Hussein.

The spokesmen of the two Kurdish factions contacted in London by phone refused to confirm that an agreement is imminent, saying reconciliation efforts are still going on.

"At this juncture there are reconciliation plans under discussion," said a PUK spokesman who did not wish to be identified.

But he and a spokesman for the KDP confirmed that the leaders of their factions will travel to Washington in mid-September for face-to-face talks mediated by senior U.S. administration officials. They refused to elaborate.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds-US

^Key Kurdish leaders to visit Washington in September

^BY SALAH NASRAWI=

^Associated Press=

CAIRO , Egypt (AP) _ Leaders of the two main Kurdish factions which control northern Iraq are going to Washington in September for talks with U.S officials on Iraq and peace in their region, Kurdish spokesmen said Monday.

The visit may signal an important landmark in the U.S effort to back Saddam Hussein's opposition groups in their effort to remove him from power.

In July the Clinton administration officially invited Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani leader of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan for reconciliation talks in Washington.

Foad Masom a representative for the PUK in London said Talabani is expected in Washington mid September for talks with senior administration officials on the efforts to reconcile the the two factions.

A spokesman for the KDP said Barzani is leaving for Washington next week for the same purposes.

Both spokesman refused to give further details about the visits of their leaders but Kurdish sources said the two leaders are scheduled to have joint meetings which American officials hope will end their contest to control the Kurdish enclave.

A Spanish deputy who arrived in Turkey after a visit to northern Iraq for meetings with the two leaders said they are expected to sign a peace accord there.

"Both sides are ready to sign the (peace) agreement in Washington on September 18-19," the Turkish news agency Anatolia quoted as saying.

The invitations were extended by U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Welsh, who visited the region in July to broker a settlement between the two groups.

Welsh talks followed reports that U.S. President Bill Clinton has asked Congress to approve the funding of covert operations against Saddam.

Congressional leaders have long expressed frustration over being able to deal with Saddam, and have on several occasions considered ways to mount operations against him.

Congress voted earlier this year to spend dlr 5 million to set up a "Radio Free Iraq" program modeled on Radio Free Europe and another dlrs 5 million to help any democratic opposition that emerges within Iraq to confront Saddam.

The two leaders will most certainly discuss with the administration officials whatever plans they have in dealing with Saddam, said the sources on condition of anonymity.

The factions have been holding peace talks along the line that separates their forces in the zone. But the negotiations have been hampered by differences over relations with the Baghdad government and over the sharing of revenue from "taxes" levied on goods smuggled into northern Iraq.

But last week the two groups agreed to free their prisoners of war and detainees, the last sign that they were heading towards a reconciliation.

The Western allies set up the Kurdish zone in 1991 after Baghdad forces crushed a Kurdish rebellion that broke out at the end of the Gulf War. The Iraqi government accuses the allies of violating the country's sovereignty.

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^BC-Turkey-Refugees

^Turkish authorities detain 52 would-be refugees from Iraq<

EDIRNE, Turkey (AP) _ Turkish border patrols on Tuesday detained 52 Iraqis who were waiting to cross illegally into Greece, Turkey's Anatolia news agency said.

A Turkish bus driver who had brought the Iraqis to the region was also detained, the news agency said.

The would-be refugees were preparing to cross the Meric River, which marks the border between Turkey and Greece in Thrace. Greeks know the river as the Evros.

Each year, thousands of illegal immigrants try to sneak across the river to make their way into northern European countries.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds, 1st Ld-Writethru

^Iraqi rival Kurdish factions exchange hundreds of detainees

^Eds: UPDATES with Barzani aide saying two sides to discuss possible joint administration in Washington talks<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) - Iraq's two main rival Kurdish groups have released more than 200 prisoners of war, the British Broadcasting Corp. reported Wednesday.

The prisoners were freed on Tuesday, BBC's monitoring service said, quoting the Kurdistan Democratic Party's radio. It said the KDP freed about 160 fighters while the PUK released 44.

The release came amid efforts aimed at ending the conflict between the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which have been wrestling for control of the autonomous Kurdish zone in northern Iraq since 1991.

The zone was created by the United States and Britain after the Iraqi government suppressed a Kurdish revolt in 1991. Recently, officials of the two factions have been negotiating moves to consolidate a U.S.-brokered cease-fire signed in May 1997.

KDP leader Massoud Barzani and head of the PUK, Jalal Talabani, are scheduled to visit the United States next week for talks with senior administration officials on reconciliation efforts.

Barzani arrived in Ankara Wednesday for talks with Turkish officials.

Barzani's aide, Sami Abdurrahman, told reporters that an informal meeting was planned between Barzani and Talabani in the United States to discuss formation of a possible joint administration in northern Iraq.

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^BC-Greece-Kurds<

^Police say they have broken up Kurdish kidnapping ring<

ATHENS, Greece (AP) _ Police Friday said they arrested a member of a group of Iraqi Kurds that allegedly kidnapped fellow refugees and extorted money for their release from relatives living in other parts of Europe.

``They kidnapped fellow Kurds and held them illegally in apartments, forcing them to communicate with relatives abroad so they could send them money through banks,`` said a police announcement. ``After they received the money, they would release them.``

Police said they arrested Hassan Hassan, 37, and issued warrants for two other Iraqi Kurds that were members of the purported extortion ring. All are Kurdish refugees.

Police did not release further details on the activities of the group, which they say may number more than three people. They also did not release any details on the number of people that had been kidnapped or released.

``The investigation is continuing,`` the announcement said.

But police did say the three members of the group had allegedly made 31 million drachmas (dlrs 103,000) ``by using this method`` in the past two months.

Hassan was initially detained along with 70 other Kurds late Thursday during a police sweep in central Athens that was launched as part of the police investigation into the kidnapping ring. The other 69 were released.

When he was picked up, police said Hassan was at a financial institution waiting for a dlrs 800 money order from Sweden.

``The amount was destined for the release of one of their illegally held compatriots,`` the announcement said. It did not say who the kidnapped man was or elaborate further.

Police said Hassan was facing felony charges of kidnapping, extortion, conspiracy and money laundering.

An estimated 50,000 Iraqi Kurds illegally enter Greece each year, seeking political asylum or clandestine transport to other points in Europe. Greece is a key stop along the refugee trail for Kurds from northern Iraq, a semi-autonomous region protected from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein since 1991 by a U.S.-led air force based in Turkey.

There have been accusations that Kurdish criminal gangs operate among the refugees, trying to cash in on the vast underground economy from immigrant smuggling, where a voyage from northern Iraq to Italy can cost up to dlrs 10,000 in travel and forged papers.

There are a number of refugee camps housing Kurds in Greece, but many fend for themselves in Athens and the southern port of Patras, where they hope to sneak aboard one of the dozens of ferry boats that daily head for Italy and other European Union ports.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Top Iraqi Kurd warns of Turks' creating a new Cyprus in Iraq

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Turkey's military intervention in northern Iraq could lead to a Cyprus-style occupation, the Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani warned in remarks published Thursday.

The Turkish presence is "dangerous, in our opinion, and it threatens Iraqi sovereignty and national unity," Talabani told the London-based, Arabic-language newspaper Al-Hayat.

Turkey has apparently maintained several thousand troops in northern Iraq since May 1997 in a bid to prevent Turkish Kurd insurgents from crossing into its territory. The Ankara government refuses to confirm a permanent force in Iraq, saying only that troops cross into the country whenever necessary.

"We fear that this could be a pretext to create a new Cyprus in this region," said Talabani, who leads the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Turkey has occupied the northern third of Cyprus since 1974 when it invaded the island after a coup by supporters of union with Greece.

Talabani was speaking in Iran before heading to Washington for talks with U.S. officials and his rival, Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

In the past, Talabani's PUK has fought against Turkish forces carrying out incursions in northern Iraq whereas Barzani's KDP has supported the Turks.

Talabani accused Turkey of using its "Turkmen brothers" _ Iraqis of Turkish origin _ as a pretext for entering northern Iraq, whose population is mostly Kurd.

"The Turkmen number several hundreds of thousands while Turkey claims that they number three to four million."

Talabani's talks in Washington are expected to deal with ways of consolidating a cease fire brokered by the United States in May 1997. The PUK and KDP have wrestled for control of the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq since the Western allies set it up in 1991 after Iraqi government forces severely crushed a Kurdish revolt.

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^Top Iraqi Kurd warns of Turks' creating a new Cyprus in Iraq

^Eds: ADDS quotes from Turkey's deputy prime minister grafts 7-8<

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In the past, Talabani's PUK has fought against Turkish forces carrying out incursions in northern Iraq whereas Barzani's KDP has supported the Turks.

In Turkey on Thursday, Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit accused Talabani of helping the Turkish Kurdish insurgents to flee from Iraq into Iran from where they can relaunch their operations.

"Since our cooperation with Barzani, it has become more and more difficult (for the insurgents) to infiltrate (into Turkey) from Iraq. Therefore, with the help of Talabani, they are crossing into Iran," Ecevit told the private Turkish television channel, NTV.

Talabani accused Turkey of using its "Turkmen brothers" — Iraqis of Turkish origin — as a pretext for entering northern Iraq, whose population is mostly Kurd.

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^Rival Iraqi Kurdish leaders reconcile, with U.S. help<

^By GEORGE GEDDA=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ Iraqi Kurd leaders, with an assist from the Clinton administration, ended long years of rivalry, agreeing to establish an elected government by next summer after a transitional period of power-sharing.

"It is a historic day," said Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. "We have closed a sad chapter in the history of the Kurdish people."

He was flanked Thursday by Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who issued an indirect warning to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein not to interfere with the reconciliation process begun by the Kurdish factions.

Albright said there can be "no more campaigns to eradicate a whole population of innocent men, women and children," a reference to the period in early 1991 when Saddam unleashed his forces against the northern-based Kurds, creating a humanitarian catastrophe.

In the aftermath of that tragedy, which occurred at the end of the Gulf War, an internationally supervised haven was established for the Kurds, which exists to this day.

Briefing reporters after the ceremony, an administration official said Talabani and Barzani reached agreement on both revenue-sharing and power-sharing, two issues at the heart of their differences, which have led to repeated military clashes in recent years.

In August and September of 1996, the rivalry reached a peak when Barzani invited Saddam to dispatch troops to help his forces fight the PUK. Talabani responded by asking Iran to send its forces to fight on his behalf. In response to Saddam's intervention, President Clinton ordered air strikes against targets in the southern part of Iraq.

On Thursday, the smiles and warm handshakes shared by the two leaders showed they have come a long way since that bleak period two years ago. Until this week, they had not met in four years.

Sentiment among Iraqi Kurds is overwhelmingly opposed to Saddam but it is not clear whether the agreement will eventually have an influence on national politics.

Barzani reportedly said last week he will not be a party to any effort to topple Saddam.

Albright promised an intensified effort to help Iraqis from all religious and ethnic groups to "develop a deeper sense of common purpose and a more effective strategy for achieving their future in a democratic and pluralistic Iraq."

The U.S. official who briefed reporters said the meeting here carried anti-Saddam overtones because it was held at the Foreign Ministry in the country of Saddam Hussein's most powerful opponent.

The agreement followed years of encouragement by a U.S. team led by David Welch, a top Albright aide in the Near East bureau. When Welch visited Kurdish territory in July, Saddam reportedly called his mission "stupid" and "naive."

The State Department briefer said holding elections will be a start-from-scratch process as there are no reliable figures on the population of the Kurdish region. He said the Kurds are expected to ask for outside help so they can establish a credible election process.

Talabani said he has no interest in establishing a separate Kurdish state in the area. According to the U.S. official, the election plan calls for the establishment of a "regional assembly" comparable in some ways to an American state legislature.

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^Iraqi Kurdish group rejects truce offer by Turkish Kurdish rebels<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish group turned down a unilateral cease-fire declared by rival Turkish Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, the Iraqi group said Monday.

The truce was declared Sunday by the Turkish Kurdish guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, the German-based Kurdish news agency DEM said.

''We have nothing to talk to them about,'' said Faik Nerweyi, a spokesman for the Iraqi group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party. ''We don't want them in northern Iraq at all.''

The cease-fire comes two weeks after an agreement was signed between Democratic Party and its Iraqi Kurdish rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, for a joint administration of the de facto autonomous Kurdish zone in northern Iraq.

The groups committed themselves to fighting the PKK in a move to appease Turkey. The PKK has been fighting for autonomy within Turkey and uses northern Iraq as a base to launch attacks.

The cease-fire announcement was apparently a political maneuver by the PKK to maintain its presence in northern Iraq, where it is greatly outnumbered by the Iraqi Kurdish forces.

The war between Turkish troops and Turkish Kurdish rebels has killed some 37,000 people since 1984.

(sh-ht-vls)

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^Iraqi Kurdish leader reassures Turkey over peace plan<

^By SUZAN FRASER=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey's premier and deputy premier talked over a U.S.-backed Kurdish peace plan with an Iraqi Kurd leader on Wednesday, afterward declaring themselves reassured the plan would not lead to creation of a Kurdish state.

The September agreement sealed a cease-fire between the two Iraqi Kurdish factions that control northern Iraq.

The accord made reference to a future federal structure for Kurds, alarming Turkey. With Iraq, Turkey opposes creation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, fearing it would encourage Kurdish rebels in its own country.

Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, one of the two factions in the accord, talked separately in Ankara with Deputy Premier Bulent Ecevit and Premier Mesut Yilmaz.

'Reference to a federal solution in the declaration were disturbing to us, but Mr. Barzani today made an announcement that appeased our fears,' Ecevit told reporters after the meeting.

Crucially, Ecevit said, Barzani agreed that 'Any solution to northern Iraq has to be within the territorial integrity of Iraq.'

Under the cease-fire accord, Barzani and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan agreed to share power and hold elections in the de facto autonomous Kurdish zone in northern Iraq, set by after 1991 Gulf War.

Talabani is due to arrive in Ankara on Saturday. It was unclear if the two former armed rivals would meet.

In Barzani's talks with Turkey's leaders, Yilmaz said, Barzani agreed to increase cooperation in the fight against the Turkish Kurdish rebel group PKK, which carries out cross-border attacks from hideouts in northern Iraq.

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^Iraqi Kurd leader: Kurd federation hinges on dialogue with a 'free Iraq'

^EDs: UPDATES with arrival of other Iraqi Kurdish leader in 14th graf, CORRECTS year of autonomy offer to 1970 sted 1978 in 10th graf

^By SELCAN HACAOGU=

^Associated Press Writer=

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ An Iraqi Kurdish leader said Saturday a proposed Kurdish federation in northern Iraq could be formed only through dialogue with a free Iraqi government.

A U.S.-backed deal in September that sealed a cease-fire between the two Iraqi Kurdish factions that control northern Iraq referred to a future federal authority for Kurds.

"That is the wish of our people," Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, told a news conference in Ankara. "The Kurdish regional parliament in 1992 declared this principal vital."

However, he said, "this can only be implemented with the central government in Baghdad when there is free Iraq."

The reference to a federal structure for Kurds had angered Turkey. Turkey opposes creation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, fearing it inspire Turkey's own Kurdish rebels in their fight for autonomy.

But Turkish leaders declared themselves reassured the plan would not lead to creation of a Kurdish state after meeting with Barzani on Wednesday.

"We do not call for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state, nor have Americans encouraged us to do so, at all," Barzani said. "We know that this is not a realistic objective and we know the consequences of calling for an independent Kurdish state in this region."

Repeatedly throughout Kurdish history, Kurds rebellions were crushed by forces of states in which they have lived. At present, they are divided by five national borders.

"Therefore, really, we look for what is possible for our people under these circumstances," Barzani said.

He made no direct reference to Saddam Hussein. Saddam rejected Kurds' 1992 call for a federal authority, saying Kurds should be satisfied with the limited autonomy he offered them in 1970.

Deputy Premier Bulent Ecevit said Wednesday that Barzani agreed that "any solution to northern Iraq has to be within the territorial integrity of Iraq."

Under the September accord, Barzani and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan agreed to share power and hold elections in the de facto autonomous Kurdish zone in northern Iraq, set up after 1991 Gulf War.

Barzani said the elections were scheduled for July.

Talabani also arrived in Ankara on Saturday and is expected to meet with Barzani on Sunday.

Barzani said they would discuss details of carrying out the accord.

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^Iraqi Kurdish leader mends relations with Turkey

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The leader of an Iraqi Kurdish group that controls part of northern Iraq on Wednesday tried to mend relations with Ankara by promising to oust Kurdish rebels from Turkey from his territory.

Turkey has long accused Jalal Talabani of harboring rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which has been fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984.

But on Wednesday, Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, pledged to help Turkey secure its border with Iraq.

''We are committed to end any presence of the PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan,'' Talabani said. ''We are committed to securing the border for Turkey and we will do this by all means.''

Talabani spoke with reporters before heading for Damascus and Tehran on his way to northern Iraq.

(ht/cph)

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^Turkey extends mandate of U.S.-led force protecting Iraqi Kurds (

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkey's Parliament on Thursday extended the mandate of a U.S.-led, Turkish-based allied force protecting Iraqi Kurds from the forces of Saddam Hussein.

By a show of hands, lawmakers extended Operation Northern Watch through June 30. The operation enforces a no-fly zone above the 36th parallel in Iraq, where Iraqi Kurds maintain a de facto autonomous state.

The vote came a week after the United States and Britain bombed Baghdad to punish Iraq for blocking U.N. weapons inspections.

The airstrikes led Turkey to close its border with Iraq for fear of an influx of Iraqi refugees. State Minister Yucel Seckiner told lawmakers Thursday that Turkey would be dealing with even more would-be immigrants if Operation Northern Watch came to an end.

Northern Watch's mandate has been renewed every six months since the end of the 1990-91 Gulf War.

More than 45 U.S. and British planes and 1,400 personnel are part of the mission, based at the Incirlik air base near the southern city of Adana.

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^Rival Iraqi Kurds plan meeting to further peace agreement<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Leaders of two Iraqi Kurdish groups are to meet soon in another step toward ending their often violent rivalry that has hampered plans for a strong opposition to Saddam Hussein, an official said Friday.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Massoud Barzani, who heads the Kurdistan Democratic Party, are to discuss ways of implementing a U.S.-brokered agreement.

The meeting would take place ``in the coming days'' in Salahuddin, a town close to the main Iraqi Kurdish city of Irbil, said Shazad Saib, the Turkey-based representative of Talabani's group.

Under the agreement reached in Washington in September, the two leaders agreed to hold regional elections next summer, and to share revenue and power, two issues at the heart of their differences.

It would be the first time the two leaders will be meeting face to face in northern Iraq since their hostilities began in 1994, although they have met several times abroad since the Washington agreement.

The two groups are hostile to the Baghdad regime, but have been more focused on fighting each other, undermining efforts to form a strong opposition that could weaken Saddam's regime.

The Kurdish groups are protected in a safe haven north of the 36th parallel, by a U.S.-led air force based in southern Turkey.

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^U.S., Britain plan continued enforcement of Iraqi no-fly zone<

^Eds: UPDATES thruout with new material, recasts<

^With Iraq<

^By LAURA MYERS=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) - The United States and Britain vowed Tuesday to keep patrolling Iraqi skies in the face of fresh threats by Saddam Hussein to confront Western warplanes in no-fly zones where a missile exchange increased tensions.

Bad weather kept U.S. and British planes out of the north Tuesday, but warplanes patrolled as usual in the southern no-fly zone despite Iraqi threats to shoot them down.

A day after Monday's U.S.-Iraq missile confrontation, American and British officials said Western fighter jets didn't encounter any Iraqi aircraft. The Iraqis claimed to be operating in the zones where their military has been banned since 1991 and 1992 to protect Kurdish and Shiite Muslim rebel groups from attack.

Col. Richard Bridges, a Pentagon spokesman, said the Clinton administration would not back down in the face of Iraqi provocation.

"It is our intention to continue to enforce the no-fly zones in both northern and southern Iraq," he said.

American fliers are prepared to act against any Iraqi aggression, Bridges added. "I'm sure that pilots will be much more alert," he said. "There'll be more adrenaline running. But the mechanisms to respond appropriately are already in place."

A British Ministry of Defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "We will continue to operate to the same rules of engagement and continue to take action necessary should the conditions of the no-fly zones be breached."

U.S. officials would not say if warplanes would fire at Iraqi aircraft they encounter. Defense Secretary William Cohen previously has said no-fly violations "will be strictly dealt with, and that would include shooting them down."

American pilots have occasionally encountered Iraqi aircraft "poking around" in the no-fly zones, but the incidents weren't considered serious enough to prompt a challenge, said a Clinton administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

On Monday, U.S. warplanes fired three missiles and six precision-guided bombs to destroy an anti-aircraft site in northern Iraq that launched three missiles at U.S. fighter jets, the Pentagon said. Iraq reported four soldiers killed and seven injured.

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan vowed Tuesday to fire again at any aircraft he said violates Iraq's airspace. He claimed that Iraqi planes were in the no-fly zones.

"Our resistance will continue against any penetration," Ramadan told Associated Press Television News. "The war is still on."

President Bill Clinton called Monday's incident an act of self-defense by the U.S. fliers, although Iraq said the Americans fired first. The Operation Northern Watch commander, Air Force Brig. Gen. David A. Deptula, released four video clips Tuesday to prove otherwise.

One tape, recorded by a video camera from an F-15E fighter jet, shows a plume of smoke and dust as an Iraqi anti-aircraft site launches a third missile at one of the U.S. planes, according to Deptula. The other three clips show F-15Es dropping munitions on the anti-aircraft site, striking the tracking radar, optical guidance unit and a command and control van, he said.

"Splash! Splash!" the pilots are heard saying as the bombs score hits.

"The times on this video and the later F-15E video prove that contrary to claims by the Saddam regime, the Iraqis launched the surface to air missiles at the ONW aircraft causing the ONW aircraft to take actions to protect themselves," Deptula said.

Iraq has always questioned the legitimacy of the no-fly zones, but has rarely engaged U.S. and British warplanes - the last time was in September 1996. Now, foreign policy experts say, Iraq is trying to provoke the United States as part of a strategy to get out from under strict U.N. economic sanctions and other controls.

"What you're watching here with Iraq challenging the no-fly zones is just the noisiest part of a very broad strategy," said Tony Cordesman, analyst at the Center for Strategic International Studies.

Iraq has never accepted the legitimacy of the no-fly zones, the first of which was created in the north in April 1991 after Iraqi tanks rolled into Kurdish areas and crushed rebels emboldened by Iraq's Gulf War defeat. The southern zone, originally drawn at the 32nd parallel, was created in August 1992. The southern zone was expanded north to the 33rd parallel in 1996 by the United States and Britain.

France, which stopped flying missions for Operation Northern Watch in 1996, confirmed on Tuesday that it pulled out of Operation Southern Watch this month in protest of the U.S. and British missile barrage.

The roughly 45 planes that patrol the northern zone are based at Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey. The United States flies 10 different types of planes, including Air Force AWACS warning and control planes, Marine Corps EA-6B electronic warfare planes, Air Force F-16 and F-15 jets, Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and Air Force HH-60 Night Hawk helicopters used for search and rescue. Britain has Tornado fighters and aerial refueling planes.

Operation Southern Watch is conducted by U.S. and British planes based in Saudi Arabia and U.S. Navy aircraft aboard carriers in the Gulf area.

^BC-US-Iraq-No-Fly,0733

^'No-fly' zones shield Kurds, Shiites and gain intelligence

^AP Photos WXS104; WX116-117

^By ROBERT BURNS=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S.-led enforcement of "no-fly" zones in northern and southern Iraq has largely succeeded in shielding minority populations from attack by the forces of Saddam Hussein. But it also has served a less obvious purpose: "spy-in-the-sky" surveillance of Saddam's military moves.

Protection for Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south is still needed, U.S. analysts say. But that aspect of the mission tells only a small part of the story of why U.S. and British forces are still enforcing the no-fly zones years after they began as mainly humanitarian gestures.

The overflights by U.S. Air Force F-16 fighter jets, F-15 strike planes, E-3 AWACS warning and control planes and other aircraft gather timely intelligence on Iraqi forces. By keeping Iraq's warplanes mostly on the ground, the no-fly zones also contribute to an erosion of Saddam's air power.

That may explain, at least in part, why Saddam suddenly is challenging the no-fly zones. On Monday an Iraqi air defense installation fired at least three surface-to-air missiles at U.S. planes in the northern zone, and on Tuesday, Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan said Iraqi planes were flying in the restricted zones.

This challenge of the no-fly zones appears to be part of a broader Iraqi effort to challenge all international restrictions — from the U.N. economic embargo to U.N. disarmament demands — that stem from Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the cease-fire it signed to end the Gulf War.

An Air Force fact sheet describes the mission in the north as enforcing the no-fly zone and monitoring Iraqi compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions. The air crews' "mission statement," however is more explicit in saying they are to "monitor and surveil Government of Iraq forces in northern Iraq."

Anthony Cordesman, an expert on the Iraqi military and a professor of national security studies at Georgetown University, said in an interview Tuesday that the monitoring of electronic signals as well as routine air surveillance in northern and southern Iraq is an "extremely valuable" part of the United States' overall strategy for constraining Iraq's military might.

The intelligence payoff is "as important in many ways" as protecting the Kurds and Shiites, Cordesman said.

Keeping most of Iraq's already depleted air force out of the no-fly zones also severely restricts Saddam's ability to train and deploy his forces, which in turn contributes to an erosion of their effectiveness. In the four-day U.S.-British air assault on Iraq earlier this month, no Iraqi aircraft challenged allied planes.

Details about current no-fly zone missions are scarce. Lt. Col. Jane Rinell, a spokeswoman for Operation Northern Watch, as the enforcement operation in northern Iraq is called, said information such as the number of planes flying and the frequency of their missions is classified secret.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds<

^Iraqi Kurdish leaders hold summit to discuss peace agreement<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ Two Iraqi Kurdish leaders opened talks Friday in their autonomous zone in northern Iraq to firm up a U.S.-brokered peace deal between their rival factions.

Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan talked in Barzani's headquarters of Salahuddin.

It was the first meeting between the two leaders in northern Iraq since 1994, when the factions started fighting for control of the region. They have met several times abroad.

The zone north of the 36th parallel was set up by the allies after the 1991 Gulf War.

The no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq are among several sources of tensions between the United States and Iraq, which claims the zones violate international law. The no-fly zones have been the scene of several confrontations between U.S. and British pilots and Iraqi forces in recent weeks following British and U.S. air raids on Iraq.

Delchad Mirani, a KDP official in London reached by telephone, said the two leaders had no plans to discuss either the airstrikes or the confrontations in the no-fly zones.

"They will be discussing the peace process and implementation of the Washington agreement," Mirani said. "There are some major issues that have not been solved, such as the question of forming an interim government between the two parties."

In September, Barzani and Talabani signed an agreement to hold regional elections this year, probably in June, and to share revenue and power.

Barzani's KDP controls two-thirds of northern Iraq; the rest is ruled by Talabani.

Talks were to continue on Saturday.

(ht-ek)

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Kurdish leaders agree to implement peace agreement

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Two Iraqi Kurdish leaders agreed Saturday to implement a U.S.-brokered peace deal between their rival factions.

The meeting between Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan was the first in the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq since 1994, when the factions started fighting for control of the region. They have met several times abroad.

They ended their two-day talks Saturday at Barzani's headquarters in the town of Salah ad-Din, said a KDP statement faxed to The Associated Press in Cairo.

The two leaders agreed to implement all the terms of the agreement signed in September by Barzani and Talabani to hold regional elections this year, probably in June, and to share revenue and power.

They also agreed to release all detainees, prepare for the return of all displaced people and open a representation office in the areas controlled by the two groups, the statement said.

Barzani's KDP controls two-thirds of northern Iraq; the rest is ruled by Talabani.

The no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel was set up by the United States, France and Britain after the 1991 Persian Gulf War as a haven for Kurds.

The zones in northern and southern Iraq are among several sources of tensions between the United States and Iraq, which claims the zones violate international law. The no-fly zones have been the scene of several confrontations between U.S. and British pilots and Iraqi forces in recent weeks following British and U.S. air raids on Iraq.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Kurdish leader holds talks with U.S., Turkish envoys<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ U.S. and Turkish envoys met a Kurdish leader Thursday in northern Iraq and discussed the implementation of a U.S.-brokered agreement between rival Kurdish parties.

The U.S. team was headed by Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Deputy Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs. Oguz Celikkol, a senior Foreign Ministry official, led the Turkish team in the talks with Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

The meeting was held at Barzani's headquarters in the town of Salah ad-Din, said a statement from the group that was faxed to The Associated Press in Cairo.

The U.S. and Turkish envoys are also to meet with Barzani's rival, Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan at his headquarters in the northeastern town of Sulaymaniya, the statement said. It did not give a date.

According to an agreement signed in Washington in September, the two Kurdish leaders agreed to hold regional elections this year, probably in June, and to share revenue and power.

Barzani and Talabani met last weekend in Salah ad-Din in the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq for the first time since 1994, when the factions started fighting for control of the region. They have met several times abroad.

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^Iraq protests U.S., Turkish meetings with Kurdish leaders<

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) _ Iraq's Foreign Ministry has criticized visits by American and Turkish diplomats with Kurdish leaders in northern Iraq as a violation of the country's sovereignty.

The statement, carried on state-run Iraqi television on Sunday night, said that last week's meetings to discuss implementation of a U.S.-brokered agreement between rival Kurdish parties was designed ``to perpetuate the abnormal situation in northern Iraq.''

The broadcast, monitored by the London-headquartered BBC, accused the United States of trying to maintain ``agents'' in the northern region to undermine ``Iraq's sovereignty, security and stability.''

The meetings in mid-January involved Elizabeth Jones, U.S. assistant deputy secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, and Oguz Celikkol, a senior Turkish Foreign Ministry official.

They met with Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, and Jalal Talabani, leader of the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

The United States and its allies set up a semi-autonomous zone for the Kurds in northern Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War. It was aimed at protecting the Kurds from Iraqi government troops after a failed uprising.

U.S. and British jets enforce a ``no-fly'' zone over the region to prevent Iraqi planes from flying there. Iraq has never recognized the zone and in recent days has challenged the Western patrol jets.

According to an agreement signed in Washington in September, the two Kurdish leaders plan to hold regional elections this year, probably in June, and to share revenue and power.

The pact is aimed at ending fighting between the rival groups that began in 1994.

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note following from IRNA on KDP. We had similar?
regards, meixler
cairo

Barzani faction denies receiving u.s. financial aid sanandaj, kurdestan prov., jan. 23, irna -- iraq's kurdestan democratic party (kdp) in a statement saturday dismissed the recent remarks of the u.s. president bill clinton and said it had never received any financial or military assistance from washington to topple saddam hussein's regime.

the kdp radio said in an announcement that the party had never extended any request for financial aid to the u.s. administration.

it said the party, led by masoud barzani, was not included in the list of the seven parties the u.s. claims to have rendered financial aids to.

saying that the party has repeatedly revealed its stands towards the iraqi regime to both the american administration and congress, it noted that the kdp felt no urgent need to receive financial aids from america.

clinton said late last week that he deemed seven iraqi dissident parties qualified to receive dlrs. 97m worth of military aid from america.

the kdp, the patriotic union of kurdistan (puk), the national solidarity group, the islamic movement of kurdistan, the constitutional monarchial movement, the supreme assembly of islamic revolution of iraq (sairi) and iraq's national congress are the seven parties recognized as qualified to receive the aid by the united states.

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^BC-Iraq-Kurds

^Kurds cautious about U.S. help in toppling Saddam

^By VIJAY JOSHI=

^Associated Press Writer=

SULAIMANIYA, Iraq (AP) — A top Kurdish leader says he will accept U.S. military aid for toppling President Saddam Hussein, but insists the job must be done by Iraqis with no "outside conspiracy."

An official of a rival Kurdish faction, however, said his group is not immediately concerned with removing the Iraqi leader from power.

The different views, revealed in separate interviews last week, demonstrate the headaches facing the United States in its campaign to encourage Iraqi dissidents to overthrow Saddam.

U.S. President Bill Clinton decided last month to give \$97 million worth of military supplies to seven Iraqi opposition groups, including the Kurdistan Democratic Party and its rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

While both groups say their ultimate goal is to bring about multi-party democracy in Iraq and secure full autonomy for the Kurdish minority, their immediate strategies are unlikely to converge soon.

"We want to end the Iraqi dictatorship. This is our main goal," Jalal Talabani, leader of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told The Associated Press in the PUK government headquarters in Sulaimaniya, 380 kilometers (235 miles) north of Baghdad.

"The dictatorship of one party, one leadership must be ended," he said.

But he rejected any plan that calls for only toppling Saddam without installing democracy.

Asked if he would accept part of the U.S. aid, Talabani said: "If they are providing arms and training unconditionally, yes. If they put conditions, one, two and three, no, we will not take."

Asked the same question, Rosch Noori Schaweess of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, was more circumspect.

"We need all the support ... which will enable us to reach the goals of the Kurdish people," he said. Then he added: "It is not one of our goals to go and topple Saddam."

Schaweess and Talabani spoke in their strongholds in the Kurdish-dominated northern Iraq, which has been out of Saddam's control since a 1991 uprising. A subsequent internecine war ended last year with the Kurdish region split into KDP and PUK governed areas.

A U.S.-mediated agreement between the two groups called for establishing a joint regional government, an interim assembly and holding elections in July, but its implementation has been delayed.

The KDP's caution is understandable given its close links with Saddam's government. The Iraqi army backed the KDP in its war with PUK in 1996.

The KDP participates in the smuggling of Iraqi oil to Turkey in violation of U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The smuggling is a source of income for both Saddam's government and the KDP.

Talabani and Schaweess, who is the "prime minister" of the KDP administration, however, stressed they would not accept direct American intervention in Iraq.

"We are not participating in outside conspiracy. I would be ashamed if America did it (oust Saddam) ... this is the task of the Iraqi opposition," Talabani said.

"We believe that the present and the future of the Iraqi nation should be in its own hands," Schaweess said in Irbil, 150 kilometers (90 miles) west of Sulaimaniya.

Talabani also dismissed a recent assessment by Gen. Anthony Zinni, the U.S. military commander in the Gulf, that Iraqi opposition groups were too weak to overthrow Saddam.

He said the Kurds have "tens of thousands" of fighters who are building links with an equally potent Shiite rebel force in southern Iraq. He acknowledged that they still need to get the support of the Sunni Muslims in the government-controlled part of Iraq.

Saddam, together with almost all members of his inner circle and top army officers belong to the Sunni sect, a minority in Shiite-dominated Iraq.

"The day we achieve unity, the second day there will be a change in Iraq," Talabani said.

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^F-16s strike at radar, anti-aircraft sites in southern Iraq<

WASHINGTON (AP) _ U.S. Air Force F-16s struck Iraqi radar and anti-aircraft sites in southern Iraq with missiles Saturday after the fighters were fired at, defense officials said.

The ``Fighting Falcon'' aircraft returned safely to base.

The officials said the incident occurred about 9:30 a.m. Iraq time (0630 GMT), around 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of Baghdad in a ``no-fly'' zone patrolled by U.S. and British planes to prevent the Iraqi military from entering the airspace and threatening opposition groups. Western planes also fly flight-interdiction sorties over northern Iraq.

The F-16s, on routine patrol, were targeted by Iraqi missile guidance radar systems and fired upon by Iraqi surface-to-air missiles, the U.S. Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, said in a statement.

U.S. officials didn't say how many F-16s were involved or how many missiles or other munitions were fired in the exchange.

This was the latest of about 160 of what the Pentagon characterizes as ``Iraqi provocations'' in the southern ``no-fly'' zone since a four-day mid-December U.S. and British attack against Iraqi targets.

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^Turkish troops kill 44 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish troops killed 44 Kurdish rebels in their latest cross-border offensive in neighboring Iraq, the military said Saturday. Ten Turkish soldiers were also killed.

The five-day offensive, which ended Friday, was carried out in a region ``adjacent to the Turkish-Iraq border,`` a military statement said.

The soldiers seized a large number of arms and ammunition as well as two Russian-made SA-7 surface-to-air rockets hidden in caves in the mountainous region.

No further detail was given on the offensive, and military officials were not available for comment.

But a newspaper reported earlier in the week that about 15,000 Turkish troops had crossed into neighboring Iraq to hunt down the rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

It was the second reported military incursion into the territory since Turkish commandos captured the group's leader Abdullah Ocalan on Feb. 15.

Turkey frequently launches incursions into northern Iraq in the spring after the snow clears to chase guerrilla fighters who maintain bases there.

The PKK has been fighting for autonomy in the southeast of Turkey since 1984. Some 37,000 people have died in the fighting.

Ocalan is awaiting trial on charges of treason and could face the death penalty if convicted.

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^Turkish troops kill 44 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq<

^Eds: UPDATES with rebels kidnapping candidate running in elections<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Turkish troops killed 44 Kurdish rebels in their latest cross-border offensive in neighboring Iraq, the military said Saturday. Ten Turkish soldiers were killed.

The five-day offensive, which ended Friday, was carried out in a region adjacent to the Turkish-Iraq border, a military statement said without elaborating.

The soldiers seized a large number of arms and ammunition as well as two Russian-made SA-7 surface-to-air rockets hidden in caves in the mountainous region.

Military officials were not available for comment.

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Turkey frequently launches incursions into northern Iraq in the spring after the snow clears to chase guerrilla fighters who maintain bases there.

Meanwhile, suspected PKK militants kidnapped a candidate of the center-right Motherland Party running for parliament in the April 18 elections, the Anatolia news agency said.

It said the rebels stormed the house of Osman Dara in the mainly-Kurdish southeastern town of Yuksekova overnight and abducted the politician, his brother and two other relatives. The two relatives were later released.

Security forces were searching the area for Dara.

Abdurrahman Keskin, mayor of nearby Hakkari and a member of the Motherland Party, claimed that the PKK was trying to target strong candidates that do not back the Kurdish struggle for autonomy.

The PKK has been fighting for autonomy in the southeast of Turkey since 1984. Some 37,000 people have died in the fighting.

Ocalan is awaiting trial on charges of treason and could face the death penalty if convicted.

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 ^Report: Turkish troops kill 37 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq
 ^EDs: UPDATES with Kurdish rebel bombing injuring four soldiers in
 Turkey

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - A 15,000-strong Turkish force backed by warplanes and helicopter gunships has killed 37 Kurdish guerrillas in a cross-border offensive in northern Iraq, a Turkish newspaper reported Sunday.

In Turkey, a bomb exploded Sunday in a coffehouse in the southern town of Dortyol in Hatay province, injuring four soldiers and the person believed to be the bomber.

A police official, speaking on condition of anonymity, blamed Kurdish rebels.

The Hurriyet daily reported that Turkish forces went after Kurdish rebels in their bases in Iraq on Friday, suffering five losses in the fighting since then.

The troops are 20 kilometers (12 miles) inside Iraqi territory, the paper said.

Turkish military officials were not immediately available for comment.

It was the third reported offensive against Kurdish insurgents in northern Iraq since Feb. 15, when Turkish forces captured Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan.

The military typically steps up its fight against the guerrillas each spring, taking advantage of milder weather.

Clashes in southeastern Turkey have killed more than 40 Kurdish rebels over the past week, authorities said.

Guerrillas belonging to Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, have been battling for autonomy for Kurds in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed 37,000 lives.

Ocalan is set to stand trial on May 31 on charges of treason and separatism. He could face the death penalty if convicted.

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^Kurdish rival make headway in US talks, official says(

^By GEORGE GEDDA=

Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) _ Leaders of the two Iraqi Kurdish groups, trying to overcome deep differences, reached agreement on key areas during lengthy talks but were unable to resolve a longstanding conflict over revenue sharing, a U.S. official said Monday.

The negotiations were carried out over nine days between senior officials of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, with the State Department serving as mediator.

The United States has for years been trying to unify the two groups so they could devote their energies to toppling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The senior U.S. official, asking not to be identified, said the two sides agreed to open party and branch offices in each other's jurisdiction, to refrain from negative press statements about each other, to return internally displaced persons and to share information regarding their joint goal of evicting Turkish Kurd rebels from Northern Iraq.

The breadth of the agreements reached at the Washington talks exceeded what the administration had anticipated, the official said.

But, the official added, agreement eluded the two sides on sharing revenue derived from customs receipts along the Iraqi-Turkish border and on the formation of both a joint regional assembly and a joint regional administration.

According to the official, the KDP and PUK came very close to reaching an agreement on revenue sharing. "There are just a few more things that need to be done," the official said.

The meeting was aimed at resolving differences over implementing a U.S.-brokered agreement signed in September.

Optimism over reconciliation was running high last September. At the time, Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, called the agreement "historic."

But implementation of the agreement has been spotty at best, and the two sides made accusatory statements about one another in the days leading up to the latest round of discussions.

In a bid to avoid recriminations, the two parties sides agreed to remain silent after the talks and to allow the State Department to brief reporters on the outcome.

Shortly after the end of the Gulf War eight years ago, Saddam unleashed his forces against the northern-based Kurds, creating a humanitarian catastrophe. Since then, the United States and allied countries have enforced a "no-fly zone" in the Kurdish area to prevent Saddam from carrying out renewed military strikes against the Kurds.

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Report: Turkey launches new military incursion in northern Iraq(ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ A 10,000-strong Turkish force, backed by helicopter gunships, launched a new cross-border offensive against Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, private NTV television reported Monday.

The offensive comes less than a week after the rebels' leader, Abdullah Ocalan, was sentenced to death for treason for leading a 15-year old war for Kurdish autonomy that left 37,000 people dead.

The troops, which entered northern Iraq on Saturday, went 15 kilometers (9 miles) deep inside Iraqi territory, the report said.

They were targeting areas close to the Iranian border, after reports that the rebels were trying to infiltrate into Iran, NTV said. No casualties were reported.

Military officials could not be reached for confirmation.

Turkey frequently crosses into neighboring Iraq, where rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, maintain bases. The latest incursion was the first since Ocalan's sentencing.

Throughout his trial, Ocalan promised to work for peace if he is spared the death sentence. His rebels vowed to escalate violence if he is executed.

Suspected rebels have staged three major attacks in Turkey since the sentencing, including a suicide bomb attack Monday which injured 17 people.

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Baghdad condemns Turkish offensive into northern Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Iraq has condemned the recent Turkish offensive into northern Iraq, calling it a violation of its sovereignty.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman quoted by Iraqi radio said late Tuesday that the incursion was a blatant and illegal move "to coincide with the feverish military aggressive actions carried out by the United States and Britain." It did not elaborate.

Turkey's private NTV television reported Monday that a 10,000-strong Turkish force, backed by helicopter gunships, launched a new cross-border offensive against Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

Saturday's offensive came less than a week after the rebels' leader, Abdullah Ocalan, was sentenced to death for treason for leading a 15-year war for Kurdish autonomy.

The troops, which entered northern Iraq, went 15 kilometers (9 miles) deep inside Iraqi territory, the report said.

There was no confirmation of the report from Turkish military officials.

The unidentified Iraqi spokesman said Turkish forces entered Iraqi territory northeast of Amadiyah "under the pretext of chasing Turkish Kurdish armed groups."

"The government of the Republic of Iraq strongly protests and condemns the new military aggression, and denounces the violation of Iraq's sovereignty and the sanctity of its land and airspace by the Turkish armed forces," the spokesman was quoted as saying by the radio which was monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

"The Republic of Iraq also affirms Iraq's right under the U.N. Charter and international law to hold Turkey fully responsible on the international level for this aggression and for all the consequences that result from its repeated acts of aggression," he added.

Turkey frequently crosses into neighboring Iraq, where rebels belonging to Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, maintain bases. The latest incursion was the first since Ocalan's sentencing.

PKK Guerrillas have been battling for autonomy for Kurds in Turkey's southeast since 1984. The fighting has claimed 37,000 lives, mostly those of Kurdish rebels and civilians.

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Iraqi Kurdish group names Talabani regional leader

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which controls part of northern Iraq, has named its top official as leader of Kurds throughout the area, the group said in a statement issued Sunday.

The group said PUK leader Jalal Talabani has been elected "leader of the Kurdish liberation movement" — equivalent to a general governor of the Kurdish autonomous region of northern Iraq.

The PUK shares control of the region with its rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Masoud Barzani. The PUK's election of Talabani will almost certainly upset Barzani who considers himself leader of the nearly 3.5 million Iraqi Kurds.

In 1992, the two groups agreed that an elected parliament should choose a governor for the region, but the rivalry between Barzani and Talabani delayed the move.

A Cabinet reshuffle also was ordered by the PUK's political bureau, according to the group's statement. It said seven new ministers were joining the administration that runs day-to-day affairs of some 2 million Kurds in the part of the region under Talabani's authority. There is a separate such administration in Barzani's area.

The two groups are hostile to the Baghdad regime but have been more focused on battling each other, undermining efforts to form a strong opposition that could weaken Saddam Hussein's regime. In April, they joined several other Iraqi opposition groups in a U.S.-led effort to topple Saddam.

The Kurdish groups are protected by U.S. warplanes based in southern Turkey that patrol the skies over northern Iraq. The Kurdish enclave, under the control of the two groups, is expected to be used as a springboard in any effort to get rid of Saddam.

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^Iraqi Kurds accuse Turkish warplanes of killing 38 civilians(

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CAIRO, Egypt (AP)_ Turkish warplanes have killed 38 civilians in
a strike on a camp of Kurdish herdsmen in Iraq, an Iraqi Kurdish
group said Thursday.

A Turkish military officer in Ankara denied the allegation,
saying that Turkish air force planes would not attack civilian
targets.

The Turkish planes struck a camp of herdsmen and their families
while pursuing Turkish Kurd rebels in northern Iraq, the Kurdistan
Democratic Party said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press
in Cairo.

The statement was confused as to the date of the airstrike,
saying it occurred on the afternoon of "Wednesday August 15."

Wednesday was Aug. 16. KDP officials could not be reached
Thursday to explain the discrepancy.

The statement said that besides 38 civilians being killed,
another 11 were wounded in the raid and four were missing.

The planes intended to strike targets of the Kurdistan Workers
Party or PKK in the northeastern border region of Iraq, the
statement said.

The Turkish military officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity,
refused to confirm that Turkish planes had bombed PKK targets in
Iraq on Tuesday or Wednesday.

However, Turkish warplanes frequently conduct raids on PKK bases
in northern Iraq.

The PKK declared a cease-fire early this year and said it was
withdrawing its forces from Turkey. The Turkish armed forces did not
recognize the cease-fire.

In the past, KDP forces have assisted the Turkish military in
operations against the PKK in Iraq.

The KDP and the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan control the
Kurdish zone of northern Iraq, an area whose autonomy has been
protected by U.S. and British planes since Iraqi government forces
brutally put down a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

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^Turkey investigating reports of civilian deaths in Iraqi raid<

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) _ The Foreign Ministry said Friday that Turkey was investigating claims that a Turkish air strike killed dozens of civilians in northern Iraq.

Turkish warplanes on Tuesday bombed positions of the Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK in northern Iraq, said Huseyin Dirioz, a spokesman for the ministry. Turkey is fighting rebels of the PKK, who waged a 15-year war for autonomy in its southeastern provinces.

The military said it took precautions to ensure that no civilians were harmed, but "allegations of civilian casualties regarding this operation are being investigated," Dirioz said.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, an Iraqi Kurdish group, claimed Thursday that Turkish warplanes struck a camp of herdsmen and their families in northern Iraq, killing 38 civilians.

The Iraqi Communist Party said Friday that 41 people, mostly women and children, were killed in that raid.

Turkey's military, which often carries out air strikes against PKK positions along the Iraqi-Turkish border, refused to comment on the claims.

The PKK declared a cease-fire early this year and said it was withdrawing its forces from Turkey, but Ankara does not recognize the unilateral cease-fire.

Northern Iraq is a de facto autonomous zone controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party and a rival Iraqi Kurdish faction. The air space is patrolled by U.S. and British planes since Iraqi government forces brutally put down a Kurdish revolt there in 1991.

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